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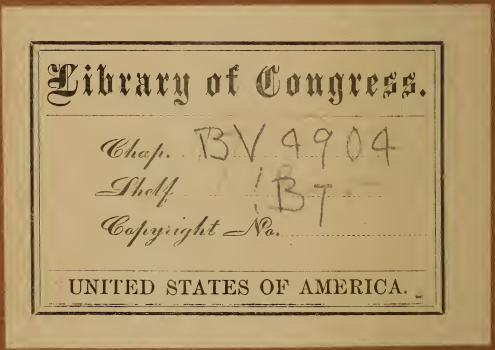

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THE

MUTE CHRISTIAN

UNDER

THE SMARTING ROD:

WITH

SOVEREIGN ANTIDOTES FOR EVERY CASE.

By the Rev. Thomas Brooks,
Of London, 1669.

BOSTON:
SETH GOLDSMITH,
CROCKER & BREWSTER, GOULD, KENDALL & LINCOLN, AND TAPPAN & DENNETT.
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

The original title page of this work, from a copy in my possession, is, "The Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod: with Soveraign Antidotes against the Most Miserable Exigents: or, A Christian with an Olive Leaf in his mouth, when he is under the greatest afflictions, the sharpest and sorest tryals and troubles, the saddest and darkest providences and changes; with Answers to divers Questions and Objections that are of greatest importance: all tend-

ing to win and work souls to be still, quiet, calm, and silent under all changes that have, [passed] or may pass upon them in this world, &c. By *Thomas Brooks*, late Preacher of the Word at St. Margaret's New Fish Street, London. *The Lord is in his holy Temple: let all the earth keep silence before him*, Hab. ii. 20. *London*, Printed for John Hancock, and to be sold at the first Shop in *Popes Head Alley*, next to Cornhil, 1669."

The London "Religious Tract Society," in 1826, reprinted this work. A copy of this reprint, and of the old edition, having come into my hands, I have been led by the pleasure and instruction which the book afforded me to obtain its republication in this country. I have used the Tract Society's edition in this reprint, but have compared it with the original work, and have restored many of the author's illustrations, and some of his idiomatic words.

The first thing which interested me in reading the preface of this book, was the simplicity

and earnestness of the writer. His style is a good specimen of plain Saxon English. There seemed to be, moreover, a directness and force of expression in it, which makes the book extremely suitable for general readers. The mode of address and of application seems to be that which in preaching is usually most acceptable, and which properly distinguishes the manner of a sermon from that of an essay.

But these things, though interesting and important, are of small value in the book compared with its rich, christian instruction, drawn from a remarkable acquaintance with the word of God, and from deep religious experience. The writer tells us, in his preface, with evident simplicity, "There hath not any author come to hand that hath handled this subject as I have done;" and the reader will find that this book is, in many excellent things, unlike other treatises on this subject, and second to none.

There is a singular copiousness of illustration in the book which will interest every reader,

and although some of the illustrations are quaint and fanciful, they are so unaffected and original, that no one can read them but with pleasure. I would go far to find another book which would excite the same interest with which I first read this volume, and it is with great pleasure that I think of the instruction and consolation which it will afford to many of the sons and daughters of sorrow.

N. ADAMS.

Boston, Oct. 12, 1841.

CONTENTS.

The Author's Preface, - - - - - - ix

The words opened, and the doctrine raised—That it is the great duty and concernment of gracious souls to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and sharpest trials, they meet with in this world, 19

For the opening of the point:

I. There is a sevenfold silence, - - - 21

II. What a prudent, a gracious, a holy silence doth include, - - - - - - - - 27

III. What a prudent, a holy silence, under afflictions doth not exclude, - - - - - - 45

IV. Eight reasons why christians must be mute and silent under their greatest afflictions, &c., - 60

Use. This truth looks sadly upon five sorts of persons, 76

Considerations to prevent men from using sinful shifts and courses to deliver themselves out of their afflictions, 83

Considerations to prevail with christians to be mute and silent under the sharpest afflictions, &c. that they may meet with in this world, - - - - 91

The heinous and dangerous nature of murmuring discovered, - - - - - - - - 108

Object. 1. Did I but know that my afflictions were in love, I would be quiet, I would hold my peace, &c. answered, - - - - - - 122

Object. 2. The Lord hath smitten me in my nearest and dearest comforts and contentments, and how can I then hold my peace? answered, - - - 132

Object. 3. Oh! but my afflictions, my troubles, have been long upon me, and how then can I hold my peace? answered, - - - - - - 149

Object. 4. I would be mute and silent under my afflictions, but they daily multiply and increase upon me, &c. how then can I be silent? answered, - 161

Object. 5. My afflictions are very great, how then can I hold my peace? answered, - - - - 166

Object. 6. Oh! but my afflictions are greater than other men's, &c., how then can I be silent? answered, 171

Object. 7. I would hold my peace, but my outward afflictions are attended with sore temptations, &c., how then can I be silent? answered five ways; wherein eight advantages are discovered that saints gain by their temptations, - - - - - 176

Object. 8. Oh! but God hath deserted me, he hath forsaken me, and hid his face from me, &c. how then can I be silent? answered; also, advantages the saints gain by their being clouded, - - - 188

Object. 9. Oh! but I am falsely accused and sadly charged and reproached in my good name, &c., how then can I be silent? answered, - - - 203

Object. 10. I have sought the Lord, in this my affliction, for this and that mercy, and still the Lord delays me, and puts me off, &c., how then can I hold my peace? how then can I be silent? &c. answered, - 217

Quest. But what are the reasons that God doth so delay and put off his people? answered, - - 222

Quest. What are the means that may help persons to be silent and quiet under their greatest afflictions, their sharpest trials, &c., answered from page 227 to the end of the book. - - - - -

THE

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

TO ALL AFFLICTED AND DISTRESSED CHRISTIANS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

DEAR BRETHREN,

THE choicest saints are born to troubles, as the sparks fly upwards, Psa. xxxiv. 19; Job v. 7; Psa. lxxxviii. 3, 4. Many are the troubles of the righteous. If they were many, and not troubles, then, as it is in the proverb, the more the happier; or if they were troubles, and not many, then the fewer the better. But God, who is infinite in wisdom, and matchless in goodness, hath ordered troubles, yea, many troubles, to come trooping in upon us on every side. As our mercies, so our crosses, seldom come single; they usually come treading one upon the heels of another; they are often like April showers, no sooner is one over, but another comes. And yet, Christians, it is mercy, it is rich mercy, that every affliction is not an execution, that every correction is not a damnation. The higher the waters rose, the nearer Noah's ark was lifted up to heaven; the more thy afflictions are increased, the more thy heart shall be raised heavenwards.

The reasons of my sending this piece into the world are these:

1. The afflicting hand of God hath been heavy upon myself, and upon my dearest relations in this world, and upon many of my precious Christian friends, whom I much love and honor in the Lord; which put me upon studying the mind of God in that scripture, which I have made the subject matter of the following discourse. Luther could not understand some Psalms till he was afflicted. The Christ-cross is no letter in the book, and yet, saith he, it hath taught me more than all the letters in the book. Afflictions are a golden key, by which the Lord opens the rich treasures of his word to his people's souls; and this in some measure through grace my soul hath experienced. When Samson had found honey, he gave some to his father and mother to eat, Judg. xiv. 9, 10. Some honey I have found in the following text, and therefore I may not, I cannot be, such a churl, as not to give them some of the honey to taste, who have drank deep of the gall and wormwood. Austin observes on Psa. lxvi. 16, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." He doth not call them, saith he, to acquaint them with speculations, how wide the earth is, how far the heavens are stretched out, what the number of the stars is, or what is the course of the sun; but come, and I will tell you the wonders of his grace, the faithfulness of his promises, the riches of his mercy to my soul. Gracious experiences are to be communicated. We learn that we may teach, is a proverb among the rabbins: and I therefore, lay in, and lay up, that I may draw forth again, and lay out for the good of many. When God hath dealt bountifully with us, others should reap some noble good by us; the family, the town, the city, the country, where a man lives, should fare the better for his faring well. Our mercies and experiences should be as a running spring at our doors, which is not only for our own use, but also for our neighbors, yea, and for strangers too.

2. What is written is permanent, and spreads itself further by far, for time, place, and persons, than the voice can reach. The pen is an artificial tongue; it speaks as well to absent as to present friends; it speaks to them that are afar off, as well as those that are near; it speaks to many thousands at once; it speaks not only to the present age, but also to succeeding ages. The pen is a kind of image of eternity, it will make a man live when he is dead. Though the prophets do not live forever, Zech. i. 5, yet their labors may. A man's writings may preach, when he cannot, when he may not, and when, by reason of bodily distempers, he dares not; yea, and that which is more, when he is not.

3. Few men, if any, have iron memories. How soon is a sermon preached forgotten, when a sermon written remains! Augustine, writing to Volusian, saith, "That which is written, is always at hand to be read, when the reader is at leisure." Men do not easily forget their own names, nor their father's house, nor the wives of their bosoms, nor their offspring, nor to eat their daily bread; and yet, ah! how easily do they forget that word of grace that should be dearer to them than all! Most men's memories, especially in the great concernments of their souls, are like a sieve or boulter, where the good corn and fine flour goes through, but the light chaff and coarse bran remains behind; or like a strainer, where the sweet liquor is strained out, but the dregs are left behind; or like a grate, that lets the pure water run away, but if there be any straws, sticks, mud, or filth, these it holds, as it were, with iron hands. Most men's memories are very treacherous, especially in good things. Few men's memories are a holy ark, a heavenly storehouse, or magazine for their souls; and therefore they stand in the more need of a written word. But,

4. Its marvellous suitableness and usefulness under those great turns and changes that have passed upon us. As every wise husbandman observes the fittest seasons to sow his seed; some he sows in the autumn and fall

of the leaf, some in the spring of the year, Isa. xxviii. 25; some in a dry season, and some in a wet; some in a moist clay, and some in a sandy, dry ground; so every spiritual husbandman must observe the fittest time to sow his spiritual seed in. He hath heavenly seed by him for all occasions and seasons, for spring and fall, for all grounds, heads, and hearts. Now, whether the seed sown in the following treatise be not suitable to the times and seasons wherein we are cast, is left to the judgment of the prudent reader to determine.

5. The good acceptance that my other weak labors have found. God hath blessed them, not only to the conviction, the edification, confirmation, and consolation of many, but also to the conversion of many. God is a free Agent, to work by what hand he pleases, and sometimes he takes pleasure to do great things by weak things, "that no flesh may glory in his presence," 1 Cor. i. 27–29. God will not despise the day of small things; and who or what art thou that darest despise that day? The Spirit breathes upon whose preaching and writing he pleases, John iii. 8, and all prospers according as that wind blows.

6. That all afflicted and distressed Christians may have a proper salve for every sore, a proper remedy against every disease at hand, Prov. xxv. 11. As every good man, so every good book, is not fit to be the *afflicted* man's companion; but this is adapted to his case. Here he may see his face. his head, his hand, his heart, his way, his works. Here he may see all his diseases discovered, and proper remedies proposed and applied. Here he may find argumen s to silence him, and means to quiet him, when it is the wo st with him. In every storm, here he may find a shelter, and in every danger, a city of refuge; in every difficulty, here he may have a light to guide him, and in eve y peril, a buckler to defend him; in every distress, here he may find a cordial to strengthen him, and in every trouble, a staff to support him.

7. To satisfy some bosom friends, some faithful friends. Man is made to be a friend, and apt for friendly offices. He that is not friendly, is not worthy to have a friend; and he that hath a friend, and doth not show himself friendly, is not worthy to be accounted a man. Friendship is a kind of life, without which there is no comfort of a man's life. Christian friendship ties such a knot, 1 Sam. xxii. 1, 2, that great Alexander cannot cut. Summer friends I value not, but winter friends are worth their weight in gold; and who can deny such any thing, especially in these days, wherein real, faithful, constant friends are so rare to be found?* The friendship of most men is like Jonah's gourd; now very promising and flourishing, and anon fading and withering. It is like some plants in the water, which have broad leaves on the surface of the water, but scarcely any root at all; their friendship is like lemons, cold within, hot without; their expressions are high, but their affections are low; they speak much, but do little: as drums, and trumpets, and ensigns in a battle, make a great noise, and a fine show, but act nothing, so these counterfeit friends will compliment highly, bow handsomely, speak plausibly, and promise greatly, and yet have neither a hand nor heart to act any thing cordially or faithfully. From such friends it is a mercy to be delivered. But for all this, there are some that are real friends, faithful friends, active friends, winter friends, bosom friends, fast friends; and for their sakes (especially those among them that have been long, very long under the smarting rod, and in the fiery furnace, and that have been often poured from vessel to vessel) have I once more appeared in print to the world.

8. Lastly, there hath not any author come to my hand, that hath handled this subject as I have done, and therefore I do not know but it may be the more grateful and acceptable to the world; and if by this essay others that

* Oh, my friends! I have never a friend, said Socrates. A friend is a very mutable creature, said Plato.

are more able shall be provoked to do more worthily upon this subject, I shall therefore rejoice. Thus I have given you a true and faithful account of the reasons that have prevailed with me to publish this treatise to the world, and to dedicate it to yourselves.

I would now give you a little good counsel, that you may so read the following discourse, as that it may turn much to your souls' advantage. Many read good books, and yet get nothing, because they read them over cursorily, slightly, and superficially; but he that would read to profit, must,

1. Look up for a blessing. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water; but all will be to no purpose, except the Lord give the increase, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. God must do the deed, or else all that is done will do you no good. If you would have this work successful and effectual, you must look off from man, and look up to God, who alone can make it a blessing to you; as, without a blessing from Heaven, thy clothes cannot warm thee, nor thy food nourish thee, nor physic cure thee, nor friends comfort thee; so without a blessing from Heaven, without the precious breathings and influences of the Spirit, what here is done will do you no good, it will not turn to your account in the day of Christ; and therefore cast an eye Heaven-wards. How many are there in these days, who when they go to read a book, never look up for God's blessing! Seneca observes, that the husbandmen in Egypt never look up to heaven for rain in time of drought, but to the overflowing of the Nile. How many there are, who when they read a book never look after the rain of God's blessing, but look to the river. They only look to the wit, the learning, the arts, the parts, the eloquence, &c. of the author; they never look so high as Heaven; and hence it comes to pass, that though these read much, yet they profit little.

2. He that would read to profit, must read and meditate. Meditation is the food of your souls; it is the very stomach and natural heat whereby spiritual truths are

digested. A man shall as soon live without his heart, as he shall be able to get good by what he reads, without meditation. Prayer, saith Augustine, without meditation, is dry and formal; and reading without meditation is useless and unprofitable. He that would be a wise, a prudent, and an able, experienced statesman, must not hastily ramble and run over many cities, countries, customs, laws, and manners of people, without serious musing and pondering upon such things as may make him an expert statesman; so he that would get good by reading, that would complete his knowledge, and perfect his experience in spiritual things, must not slightly and hastily ramble and run over this book or that, but ponder upon what he reads; as Mary pondered the saying of the angel in her heart. "Lord," saith Augustine, "the more I meditate on thee, the sweeter thou art to me;" so the more you shall meditate on the following matter, the sweeter it will be to you. They usually thrive best who meditate most. Meditation is a soul-nourishing duty, a grace-strengthening duty. Gerson calls meditation the nurse of prayer; Ierom calls it his paradise; Basil calls it the treasury where all the graces are stored up; Theophylact calls it the very gate and portal by which we enter into glory; and Aristotle, though a heathen, places felicity in the contemplation of the mind. You may read much, and hear much; yet without meditation you will never be excellent, you will never be eminent christians.

3. Read, and try what thou readest; take nothing upon trust, but all upon trial, 1 John iv. 1, as those noble Bereans did, Acts xvii. 10, 11. You will try, and tell, and weigh gold, though it be handed to you by your fathers; and so should you all those heavenly truths that are handed to you by your spiritual fathers. I hope, upon trial, you will find nothing but what will hold weight in the balance of the sanctuary; and though all be not gold that glitters, yet I judge that you will find nothing here to glitter, that will not be found, upon trial, to be true gold.

4. Read, and do; read, and practise what you read, or else all your reading will do you no good. He that hath a good book in his hand, but not a lesson of it in his heart, or life, is like that ass that carries rich burdens and feeds upon thistles. In divine account, a man knows no more than he doth. Profession, without practice, will but make a man twice told a child of darkness. To speak well is to sound like a cymbal; but to do well is to act like an angel. He that practices what he reads and understands, God will help him to understand what he understands not, John vii. 16, 17; Psa. cxix. 98, 99, 100. There is no fear of knowing too much, though there is much fear in practising too little. The most doing man shall be the most knowing man; the mightiest man in practice, will, in the end, prove the mightiest man in scripture. Theory is the guide of practice, and practice is the life of theory. Salvian relates how the heathen did reproach some christians who by their lewd lives made the gospel of Christ to be a reproach. Where (said they) is that good law which they do believe? where are those rules of godliness which they do learn? They read the holy gospel, and yet are unclean; they hear the apostle's writings, and yet live in drunkenness; they follow Christ, and yet disobey Christ; they profess a holy law, and yet lead impure lives. Ah! how may many preachers take up sad complaints against many readers in these days! They read our works, and yet in their lives they deny our works; they praise our works, and yet in their conversations they reproach our works; they cry up our labors in their discourses, and yet they cry them down in their practices. Yet I hope better things of you into whose hands this treatise shall fall. The Samaritan woman did not fill her pitcher with water that she might talk of it, but that she might use it. The application is easy.

5. Read and apply. Reading is but the drawing of the bow; application is the hitting of the mark. The

choicest truths will no further profit you, than they are applied by you; you had as good not read, as not apply what you read. The plaster will not heal, if it be not applied. No man attains to health by reading Galen, or by knowing Hippocrates' aphorisms, but by the practical application of them. All the reading in the world will never make for the health of your souls, except you apply what you read. The true reason why many read so much, and profit so little, is, because they do not apply and bring home what they read to their own souls. But,

6. Read and pray. He that makes not conscience of praying over what he reads, will find little sweetness or profit in his reading. No man makes such earnings of his reading, as he that prays over what he reads. Luther professeth, that he profited more in the knowledge of the scriptures, by prayer, in a short space of time, than by study in a longer. John, while weeping, had the sealed book opened. Men would gain much more than they do, by reading good men's works, if they would but pray more over what they read. Ah, christians! pray before you read, and pray after you read, that all may be blessed and sanctified to you. When you have done reading, usually close up thus:

> "So let me live, so let me die,
> That I may live eternally."

And when you are in the mount for yourselves, bear him upon your hearts, who is willing to spend and be spent for your sakes, for your souls. O pray for me, that I may more and more be under the rich influences and glorious out-pourings of the Spirit; that I may be an able minister of the New Testament, not of the letter but of the Spirit, 2 Cor. iii. 6; that I may always find an everlasting spring, and an overflowing fountain within me, which may always make me faithful, constant, and abundant, in the work of the Lord; and that I may live daily

under those inward teachings of the Spirit, that may enable me to speak from the heart to the heart, from the conscience to the conscience, and from experience to experience; that I may be a burning and a shining light; that everlasting arms may be still under me; that whilst I live, I may be serviceable to the glory of God, and his people's good; that nothing may discourage me in my work; and that when my work is done, I may give up my account with joy, and not with grief. I shall follow these poor labors with my weak prayers, that they may contribute much to your internal and eternal welfare; and so rest,

Your souls' servant in our dearest Lord,

THOMAS BROOKS.

THE

MUTE CHRISTIAN

UNDER

THE SMARTING ROD.

PSALM XXXIX. 9.

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.

THIS Psalm consists of two parts: a narration and prayer take up the whole. In the former you have the prophet's disease discovered, and in the latter the remedy applied. My text falls in the latter part, where you have the way of David's cure, or the means by which his soul was reduced to a still and quiet temper. I shall give a little light into the words, and then come to the point that I intend to stand upon.

"I was dumb." The Hebrew word signi-

fies to be mute, tongue-tied, or dumb; it signifies also to bind, as well as to be mute and dumb, because they that are dumb are, as it were, tongue-tied, and bound up. The sight of God's hand in the affliction that was upon him, makes him lay a law of silence upon his heart and tongue.

"I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." He looks through all secondary causes, to the First Cause, and is silent; he sees the hand of God in all, and so sits mute and quiet.

The sight of God in affliction, is of an irresistible efficacy, to silence the heart, and to stop the mouth of a gracious man. In the words you may observe three things:

1. The person speaking, and that is David; David a king, David a saint, David a man after God's own heart, David a christian. And here we are to look upon David, not as a king, but as a christian, as a man whose heart was right with God.

2. The action and carriage of David under the hand of God, in these words, "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth."

3. The reason of this humble and sweet carriage of his, in these words, "because thou didst it." The proposition is this:

Doct. "That it is the great duty and concernment of gracious souls to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest

providences, and sharpest trials that they meet with in this world."

For the opening and clearing up of this great and useful truth, I shall inquire,

I. What this silence is that is here pointed at.

II. What a gracious, a holy silence doth include.

III. What this holy silence doth not exclude.

IV. The reasons of the point: and then bring home all by way of application to our own souls.

I. For the first, What is the silence here meant? I answer, There is a seven-fold silence.

1. There is a stoical silence. The stoics of old thought it altogether below a man, that hath reason and understanding, either to rejoice in any good, or to mourn for any evil. But this stoical silence is such a sinful insensibleness, as is very provoking to a holy God, Isa. xxvi. 10, 11. God will make the insensible sinner sensible, either of his hand here, or of his wrath in hell. It is a heathenish and a horrid sin, to be without natural affection, Rom. i. 31. Of this sin Quintus Fabius Maximus seems to be guilty, who, when he heard that his mother and wife, whom he dearly loved, were slain by the fall of an house, and that his younger son, a brave, hopeful young man, died at the same time in Umbria, never changed his

countenance, but went on with the affairs of the commonwealth as if no such calamity had befallen him. This is a sottish insensibleness, Job xxxvi. 13. If the loss of a child in the house be no more to thee than the loss of a chick in the yard, thy heart is base and sordid, and thou mayest well expect some sore awakening judgment. Aristotle speaks of fishes which, though they have spears thrust into their sides, yet awake not. God thrusts many a sharp spear through a sinner's heart, and yet he feels nothing; he complains of nothing. These men's souls will bleed to death. Such stupidity is a curse, which many a man lies under. This stoical silence, which is but a sinful sullenness, is not the silence here meant.

2. There is a politic silence; many are silent out of policy. If they were not silent, they would lay themselves more open, either to the rage and fury of men, or else to the plots and designs of men; to prevent which, they are silent, and will lay their hands upon their mouths, that others may not lay their hands upon their estates, lives, or liberties. "And Saul also went home to Gibeah; and there went with him a band of men, whose hearts God had touched. But the children of Belial said, How shall this man save us? And they despised him, and brought him no presents. But he held his peace," or was as though he had been deaf, 1 Sam. x. 26, 27. This new king, being but

newly entered upon his kingly government, and observing his condition to be but mean and low, his friends but few, and his enemies many and potent, sons of Belial, that is, men without yoke, (as the word signifies,) men that were desperately wicked, who would neither submit to reason nor religion, nor be governed by the laws of nature, nor of nations, nor yet by the laws of God; this young prince, in order to prevent sedition and rebellion, blood and destruction, prudently and politically chooses rather to lay his hand upon his mouth, than to take a wolf by the ear or a lion by the beard. He therefore turns a deaf ear to all they say; his unsettled condition requiring silence. But this is not the silence the text speaks of.

3. There is a foolish silence. Some fools there be, that can neither do well nor speak well; and because they cannot word it, neither as they would nor as they should, they are so wise as to be mute. "Even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding," Prov. xvii. 28. As he cannot be wise that speaks much, so he cannot be known for a fool that says nothing. There are many wise fools in the world. There are many silly souls, who, by holding their tongues, gain the credit and honor of being discreet men. He that doth not discover his want of wisdom, by foolish babbling, is accounted wise,

though he may be otherwise. Silence is so rare a virtue, where wisdom doth regulate it, that it is accounted a virtue where folly doth impose it. Silence was so highly honored among the old Romans, that they erected altars to it. That man shall pass for a man of understanding, who so far understands himself as to hold his tongue; for though it be a great misery to be a fool, yet it is a greater, that a man cannot be a fool but he must needs show it. But this foolish silence is not the silence here meant.

4. There is a sullen silence. Many, to gratify a humor, are sullenly silent. These are troubled with a dumb devil, which was the worst of all the devils you read of in the scripture, Mark ix. 17—29. There is a generation amongst us, who, when they are under the afflicting hand of God, have no mouth to plead with God, no lips to praise God, no tongue to justify God; these are possessed with a dumb devil: and this dumb devil had possessed Ahab for a time: "And Ahab came into his house, heavy and displeased, and laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread," 1 Kings xxi. 4. Ahab's ambitious humor, his covetous humor, being crossed, he is resolved to starve himself, and to die of the sullens. A sullen silence is both a sin and a punishment; no devil frets and vexes, wears and wastes the

spirits of a man like this dumb devil, like this sullen silence. But this is not the silence here meant.

5. There is a forced silence. Many are silent perforce. He that is under the power of his enemy, though he suffer many hard things, yet he is silent under his sufferings, because he knows he is liable to worse. He that hath taken away his liberty, may take away his life; he that hath taken away his money, may take off his head; he that hath let him blood in the foot, may let him blood in the throat, if he will not be still and quiet; and this works silence perforce. So when many are under the afflicting hand of God, conscience tells them, that now they are under the hand of an enemy, and the power of that God whom they have dishonored, whose Son they have crucified, whose Spirit they have grieved, whose righteous laws they have transgressed, whose ordinances they have despised, and whose people they have abused and opposed; and that he that hath taken away one child, may take away every child; he that hath taken away the wife, might have taken away the husband; he that hath taken away some part of the estate, might have taken away all the estate; and he who hath inflicted some distempers upon the body, might have cast both body and soul into hell-fire forever; he that hath shut him up in his chamber, may shut him out of heaven at pleasure.

Thoughts of these things make many a sinner silent under the hand of God. The eye that sin shuts, afflictions open. But this is but a forced silence. Such was the silence of Philip II. of Spain, who, when his invincible Armada, that had been three years a fitting, was lost, gave command that, all over Spain, they should give thanks to God and the saints that it was no more grievous. As the cudgel forces the dog to be quiet and still, and the rod forces the child to be silent and mute; so the apprehensions of what God hath done, and of what God may do, force many a soul to be silent. But this is not the silence here meant. A forced silence is no silence in the eye of God.

6. There is a despairing silence. A despairing soul is a terror to himself; he hath a hell in his heart, and horror in his conscience. He looks upwards, and there he beholds God frowning, and Christ bleeding; he looks inwards, and there he finds conscience accusing and condemning him. He looks on the one side of him, and there he hears all his sins crying out, We are thine, and we will follow thee, we will go to the grave and to judgment with thee, and from judgment we will go to hell with thee. He looks on the other side of him, and there he sees infernal fiends, in fearful shapes, amazing and terrifying him, and waiting to receive his despairing soul as soon

as she shall take her leave of his wretched body. He looks above him, and there he sees the gates of heaven shut against him; he looks beneath him, and there he sees hell gaping for him; and, under these sad sights, he is full of secret conclusions against his own soul. There is mercy for others, saith the despairing soul, but none for me; grace and favor for others, but none for me; pardon and peace for others, and none for me; blessedness and happiness for others, but none for me. There is no help, there is no hope, no, Jer. ii. 25; xvii. 12. As that despairing Pope said, The cross could do him no good, because he had so often sold it. Now under these dismal apprehensions and sad conclusions about its present and future condition, the despairing soul sits silent, being filled with amazement and astonishment. "I am so troubled that I cannot speak," Psa. lxxvii. 4. But this is not the silence here meant. But,

7. Lastly, There is a prudent silence, a holy, a gracious silence, that springs from prudent principles, from holy principles, and from gracious causes and considerations; and this is the silence here meant. And this I fully discover in my answers to the second question, which is this,

II. What doth a prudent, a gracious, a holy silence include?

Ans. It includes these eight things:

1. It includes a sight of God, and an acknowledgment of God, as the Author of all

the afflictions, that come upon us; and this you have plain in the text, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." The psalmist looks through secondary causes to the First Cause, and so sits mute before the Lord. In second causes, many times a christian may see much envy, hatred, malice, pride, &c.; but in the First Cause he can see nothing but grace and mercy, sweetness and goodness. There is no sickness so little that God does not send, though it be but the aching of the little finger. As the scribe is more eyed and properly said to write, than the pen; and he that maketh and keepeth the clock, is more properly said to make it go and strike, than the wheels and weights that hang upon it; and every workman is more eyed, and properly said to effect his works, than the tools which he useth as his instruments; so the Lord, who is the chief Agent and mover in all actions, and who hath the greatest hand in all our afflictions, is more to be eyed and owned, than any inferior or subordinate causes whatsoever. So Job beheld God in all; "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away," Job i. 21. Had he not seen God in the affliction, he would have cried out, Oh these wretched Chaldeans! they have plundered and spoiled me! these wicked Sabeans! they have robbed and wronged me! Job discerns God's commission in the Chaldeans' and the Sabeans'

hands, and then lays his own hand upon his mouth. So Aaron, beholding the hand of God in the untimely death of his two sons, held his peace, Lev. x. 3. The sight of God, in this sad stroke, is a bridle both to his mind and mouth, he neither mutters nor murmurs. So Joseph saw the hand of God in his brethren's selling him into Egypt, Gen. xlv. 8, and that silences him.

Men that see not God in an affliction, are easily cast into a feverish fit; they will quickly be in a flame; and when their passions are up, and their hearts on fire, they will begin to be saucy, and tell God to his teeth, that they do well to be angry, Jonah iv. 8, 9. Such as will not acknowledge God to be the Author of all their afflictions, will be ready enough to fall in with that mad principle of the Manichees, who maintained the devil to be the author of all calamities; as if there could be any evil (or affliction) in the city, and the Lord have no hand in it, Amos iii. 6. Such as can see the ordering hand of God in all their afflictions, will, with David, lay their hands upon their mouths, when the rod of God is upon their backs, 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 12. If God's hand be not seen in the affliction, the heart will do nothing but fret and rage under affliction.

2. It includes some holy, gracious apprehensions, of the majesty, sovereignty, dignity, authority, and presence of that God under

whose afflicting hand we are. "But the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him," Hab. ii. 20. When God would have all the people of the earth to be hushed, quiet, and silent before him, he would have them to behold him in his temple, where he sits in state, in majesty, and glory. "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God," Zeph. i. 7. Murmur not, repine not, quarrel not: stand mute, and be silent, lay thy hand on thy mouth, when his hand is upon thy back, who is all eye to see, as well as all hand to punish. As the eyes of a well drawn picture are fastened on thee which way soever thou turnest; so are the eyes of the Lord, and therefore thou hast cause to stand mute before him.

Thus Aaron had an eye to the sovereignty of God, Lev. x. 3, and that silences him. And Job had an eye upon the majesty of God, Job xxxvii. 23, 24, and that stills him. And Eli had an eye upon the authority and presence of God, 1 Sam. iii. 11—18, and that quiets him. A man never comes to humble himself, nor to be silent under the hand of God, till he comes to see the hand of God to be a mighty hand. "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God," 1 Pet. v. 6. When men look upon the hand of God as a weak hand, a feeble hand, a low hand, a mean hand, their hearts rise against his hand: "Who is the Lord," said Pharaoh,

"that I should obey his voice?" Exod. 5. 2. And till Pharaoh came to see the hand of God, and to feel it as a mighty hand, he would not let Israel go. When Tiribazus, a noble Persian, was arrested, at first he drew out his sword, and defended himself; but when they charged him in the king's name, and informed him that they came from the king, and were commanded to bring him to the king, he yielded willingly. So, when afflictions arrest us, we shall murmur, and grumble, and struggle, and strive even to the death, before we shall yield to that God that strikes, till we come to see his majesty and authority, Isa. xxvi. 11, 12, till we come to see him as the King of kings, and Lord of lords, Rev. xix. 16. It is such a sight of God as this, that makes the heart to stoop under his almighty hand. The Thracians being ignorant of the dignity and majesty of God, when it thundered and lightened used to express their madness and folly in shooting their arrows against heaven, threatning-wise. As a sight of his grace cheers the soul, so a sight of his greatness and glory silences the soul. But,

3. A gracious, a prudent silence includes a holy quietness, and calmness of mind and spirit, under the afflicting hand of God. A gracious silence shuts out all inward heats, murmurings, frettings, quarrellings, wranglings, and boilings of heart, "Truly my soul keepeth

silence unto God," Psa. lxii. 1, or is silent or still; that is, my soul is quiet, and submissive to God; all murmurings and repinings, passions, and turbulent affections, being allayed, tamed, and subdued. This also is clear in the text, and in the former instances of Aaron, Eli, and Job; they saw that it was a Father that put those bitter cups into their hands, and love that laid those heavy crosses upon their shoulders, and grace that put those yokes about their necks, and this caused much quietness and calmness in their spirits. Marius bit, in his pain, when the chirurgeon cut off his leg. Some men, when God cuts off this mercy and that mercy from them, bite, in their pain, they hide and conceal their grief and trouble; but could you but look into their hearts, you would find all in an uproar, all out of order, all in a flame; and, however they may seem to be cold without, yet they are all in a hot, burning fever within. Such a feverish fit David was once in, Psa. xxxix. 3. But certainly a holy silence allays all tumults in the mind, and makes a man in patience to possess his own soul, Luke xxi. 19; which, next to his possession of God, is the choicest and sweetest possession in all the world. The law of silence is as well upon that man's heart and mind, as it is upon his tongue, who is truly and divinely silent under the rebuking hand of God. As tongue-service, abstracted from

heart-service, is no service in the account of God, Isa. xxix. 13; Matt. xv. 8, 9, so tongue-silence, abstracted from heart-silence, is no silence in the esteem of God. A man is then graciously silent, when all is quiet within and without.

David by his harp could allay the tumultuous motions of Saul's mind. When God's people are under the rod, he makes, by his Spirit and word, such sweet music in their souls, as allays all tumultuous motions, passions, and perturbations, Psa. xciv. 17—19; cxix. 49, 50; so that they sit quiet and still, and in peace possess their own souls.

4. A prudent, a holy silence, takes in a humble justifying, clearing, and acquitting of God of all blame, rigor, and injustice, in all the afflictions he brings upon us. "That thou mayest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest," Psa. li. 4, that is, when thou correctest. God's judging his people, is God's correcting or chastening of his people. "When we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord," 1 Cor. xi. 32. David's great care, when he was under the afflicting hand of God, was to clear the Lord of injustice. "Ah! Lord," saith he, "there is not the least show, spot, stain, blemish, or mixture of injustice, in all the afflictions thou hast brought upon me; I desire to take shame to myself, and to set to my seal, that the Lord

is righteous, and that there is no injustice, no cruelty, no extremity, in all that the Lord hath brought upon me." And so in Psa. cxix. 75, 137, he sweetly and readily subscribes unto the righteousness of God in those sharp and smart afflictions that God exercised him with: "I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. Righteous art thou, O Lord, and upright are thy judgments." God's judgments are always just; he never afflicts but in faithfulness. His will is the rule of justice; and, therefore, a gracious soul dares not cavil nor question his proceedings. The afflicted soul knows, that a righteous God can do nothing but that which is righteous; it knows, that God is incontrollable, and therefore, the afflicted man puts his mouth in the dust, and keeps silence before him. Who dare say, "Wherefore hast thou done so?" 2 Sam. xvi. 10. Silently to kiss the rod, and the hand that whips with it, is the noblest way of clearing the Lord of all injustice.

The Babylonish captivity was the sorest, the heaviest affliction, that ever God inflicted upon any people under heaven, Lam. i. 12, and Dan. ix. 12, &c. Yet, under those smart afflictions, wisdom is justified of her children. "Thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly," Neh. ix. 33. "The Lord is right-

eous, for I have rebelled against him," Lam. i. 18. A holy silence shines in nothing more, than in a humble justifying and clearing of God from all that which a corrupt heart is apt enough to charge God with in the day of affliction. God, in that he is good, can give nothing, and do nothing, but that which is good.

5. A holy silence includes gracious, blessed, soul-quieting conclusions, about the issue and event of those afflictions that are upon us, Lam. iii. 27—34. In this choice scripture, you may observe these five soul-stilling conclusions:

(1.) (And that more generally,) That they shall work for their good. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth," ver. 27. A gracious soul secretly concludes, as stars shine brightest in the night, so God will make my soul shine and glitter like gold, whilst I am in, and when I come out of this furnace of affliction. "He knoweth the way that I take; and when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold," Job xxiii. 10.

Surely, as the taste of honey did open Jonathan's eyes, so this cross, this affliction, shall open mine eyes; by this stroke I shall come to have a clearer sight of my sins, and of myself, and a fuller sight of my God, Job xxxiii. 27, 28; xl. 4, 5; xlii. 1—6.

Surely this affliction shall issue in the purging away of my dross, Isa. i. 25.

Surely, as ploughing the ground killeth the weeds, and harrowing breaketh hard clods, so these afflictions shall kill my sins, and soften my heart, Hos. v. 15; vi. 1—3.

Surely, as the plaster draws out the core, so the afflictions that are upon me shall draw out the core of pride, the core of self-love, the core of envy, the core of earthliness, the core of formality, the core of hypocrisy, Psa. cxix. 67—71.

Surely by these the Lord will crucify my heart more and more to the world, and the world to my heart, Gal. vi. 14; Psa. cxxxi. 1, 2.

Surely by these afflictions the Lord will hide pride from my soul, Job xxxiii. 14—21.

Surely these afflictions are but the Lord's pruning-knives, by which he will bleed my sins, and prune my heart, and make it more fertile and fruitful; they are but the Lord's portion, by which he will clear me, and rid me of those spiritual diseases and maladies which are most deadly and dangerous to my soul.

Affliction is such a potion as will carry away all ill humors.

Surely these shall increase my spiritual experiences, Rom. v. 3, 4.

Surely by these I shall be made more partaker of God's holiness, Heb. xii. 10. Sharp afflictions make holy hearts.

Surely by these God will communicate more of himself unto me, Hos. ii. 14.

Surely by these afflictions the Lord will draw out my heart more and more to seek him, Isa. xxvi. 16. "In their afflictions they will seek me early," Hos. v. 15; or, as the Hebrew hath it, they will morning me. In times of affliction, christians will industriously, speedily, early seek unto the Lord.

Surely by these trials and troubles the Lord will fix my soul more than ever upon the great concernments of another world, Rom. viii. 17, 18; 2 Cor. iv. 16—18.

Surely by these afflictions the Lord will work in me more tenderness and compassion towards those that are afflicted, Heb. x. 34; xii. 3. The Romans punished one that was seen looking out of his window with a crown of roses on his head, in a time of public calamity.

Surely these are but God's love tokens. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten," Rev. iii. 19. Seneca persuaded his friend Polybius to bear his affliction quietly, because he was the Emperor's favorite, telling him it was not lawful to complain while Cesar was his friend. O my soul! be quiet, be still; all is in love, all is a fruit of Divine favor; I see honey upon the top of every twig; the rod is but a rosemary branch; I have sugar with my gall, and wine with my wormwood; therefore,

be silent, O my soul! And this general conclusion, that all shall be for good, had this blessed effect upon the church, "He sitteth alone, and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him," ver. 28.

Affliction abases the loveliness of the world without, that might entice us; it abates the lustiness of the flesh within, which might else ensnare us; and it abates the spirit in his quarrel against the flesh and the world; by all which it proves a mighty advantage unto us.

(2.) They shall keep them humble and low: "He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope," ver. 29. Some say, that these words are an allusion to the manner of those that, having been conquered and subdued, lay their necks down at the conqueror's feet, to be trampled upon, and to lick up the dust that is under the conqueror's feet. Others of the learned look upon the words as an allusion to poor petitioners, who cast themselves down at princes' feet, that they may draw forth their pity and compassion towards them. Aristippus fell on the ground before Dionysius and kissed his feet when he presented a petition to him, and gave as the reason, "He hath ears in his feet." Take it which way you will, it holds forth this to us, "that holy hearts will be humble under the afflicting hand of God." When God's rod is upon their backs, their mouths shall be in the dust. A good heart

will lie lowest, when the hand of God is lifted highest, Job xli. 1—7; Acts ix. 1—8.

(3.) The third soul-quieting conclusion you have in ver. 31, "For the Lord will not cast off forever;" the rod shall not always lie upon the back of the righteous. "At even-tide, lo! there is trouble; but afore morning it is gone," Isa. xvii. 14. As Athanasius said to his friends, when they came to bewail his misery and banishment, It is but a little cloud, said he, and will quickly be gone. There are none of God's afflicted ones, that have not their intermissions, respites, breathing-whiles; yea, so small a while doth the hand of the Lord rest upon his people, that Luther cannot get diminutives enough to extenuate it; for he calls it "a very little cross that we bear." "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, (or for a little space, a little while,) until the indignation be overpast," Isa. xxvi. 20. The indignation doth not pass, but overpass. The sharpness, shortness, and suddenness of the saints' afflictions, is set forth by the travail of a woman, John xvi. 21, which is sharp, short, and sudden.

(4.) The fourth soul-silencing conclusion you have in ver. 32, "But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies." In wrath

God remembers mercy, Hab. iii. 2. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," Psa. xxx. 5. Their mourning shall last but till morning. God will turn their winter's night into a summer's day, their sighing into singing, their grief into gladness, their mourning into music, their bitter into sweet, their wilderness into a paradise. The life of a christian is filled up with interchanges of sickness and health, weakness and strength, want and wealth, disgrace and honor, crosses and comforts, miseries and mercies, joys and sorrows, mirth and mourning. All honey would harm us, all wormwood would undo us; a composition of both is the best way in the world to keep our souls in a healthy constitution. It is best, and most for the health of the soul, that the south wind of mercy, and the north wind of adversity, do blow upon it: and every wind that blows, shall blow good to the saints; yet certainly their sins die most, and their graces thrive best, when they are under the drying, nipping north wind of calamity, as well as under the warm, cherishing south wind of mercy and prosperity.

(5.) The fifth soul-quieting conclusion you have in ver. 33, "For he doth not afflict willingly, (or, as the Hebrew hath it, from his heart,) nor grieve the children of men." The church concludes, that God's heart was not in their afflictions, though his hand was; he takes

no delight to afflict his children, it goes against his heart; it is a grief to him to be grievous to them, a pain to him to be punishing them, a death to him to be striking them; he hath no will, no motion, no inclination, no disposition, to that work of afflicting his people; and, therefore, he calls it his strange work, Isa. xxviii. 21. Mercy and punishment flow from God, as the honey and the sting from the bee: the bee yieldeth honey of her own nature, but she doth not sting but when she is provoked. He takes delight in showing mercy, Mic. vii. 18. He takes no pleasure in giving his people up to adversity, Hos. xi. 8. Mercy and kindness flow from him freely, naturally; he is never severe, never harsh; he never stings, he never terrifies us, but when he is sadly provoked by us. God's hand sometimes may lie very hard upon his people, when his heart (at those very times,) may be yearning towards his people, Jer. xxxi. 18—20. No man can tell how the heart of God stands, by his hand: his hand of mercy may be open to those against whom his heart is set; as you see in the rich (poor) fool, and Dives, in the gospel; and his hand of severity may lie hard upon those on whom he hath set his heart, as you may see in Job and Lazarus. And thus you see those gracious, blessed, soul-quieting conclusions, about the issue and event of afflictions, that a holy, a prudent silence doth include.

6. A holy, a prudent silence, includes a strict charge, a solemn command that conscience lays upon the soul, to be quiet and still. "Rest in the Lord, (or, as the Hebrew hath it, be silent to the Lord,) and wait patiently for him," Psa. xxxvii. 7. I charge thee, O my soul! not to mutter, nor to murmur. I command thee, O my soul! to be dumb and silent under the afflicting hand of God. As Christ laid a charge, a command upon the boisterous winds, and the roaring, raging seas, "Be still, and there was a great calm;" so conscience lays a charge upon the soul to be quiet and still. "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thy heart: wait, I say, on the Lord," Psa. xxvii. 14. Peace, O my soul, be still; leave your muttering, your murmuring, your complaining, your chafing and vexing, and lay your hand upon your mouth, and be silent. Conscience allays and stills all the tumults and uproars that be in the soul, by such like reasonings as the town clerk of Ephesus stilled that uproar; "For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse," Acts xix. 40. O my soul! be quiet, be silent, else thou wilt one day be called in question for all those inward mutterings, uproars, and passions that are in thee, seeing no sufficient cause can be

produced why you should murmur, quarrel, or wrangle, under the righteous hand of God.

7. A holy, a prudent silence, includes a surrendering, a resigning up of ourselves to God, whilst we are under his afflicting hand, James iv. 7. The silent soul gives himself up to God, 1 Sam. iii. 18. The secret language of the soul is this, Lord, here am I, do with me what thou pleasest, 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26; Acts xxi. 14. Write upon me as thou pleasest, I give up myself to be at thy disposal.

There was a good woman, who, when she was sick, being asked, whether she were willing to live or die? answered, "Which God pleaseth." But, said one that stood by, "If God should refer it to you, which would you choose?" "Truly," said she, "if God should refer it to me, I would even refer it to him again." This was a soul worth gold. Well, saith a gracious soul, the ambitious man gives himself up to his honors, but I give up myself unto thee; the voluptuous man gives himself up to his pleasures, but I give myself to thee; the covetous man gives himself up to his bags, but I give myself to thee; the drunkard gives himself up to his cups, but I give myself to thee; the papist gives up himself to his idols, but I give myself to thee; the Turk gives up himself to his Mahomet, but I give up myself to thee; the heretic gives up him-

self to his heretical opinions, but I give up myself to thee. Lord, lay what burden thou wilt upon me, only let thy everlasting arms be under me: strike, Lord, strike, and spare not,* for I lie down in thy will, I have learned to say Amen to thy Amen; thou hast a greater interest in me than I have in myself, and therefore, I give up myself unto thee, and am willing to be at thy disposal, to receive what impression thou shalt stamp upon me. O blessed Lord! hast thou not again and again said unto me, as once the king of Israel said to the king of Syria, "I am thine, and all that I have," 1 Kings xx. 4. I am thine, O soul! to save thee; my mercy is thine to pardon thee; my blood is thine to cleanse thee; my merits are thine to justify thee; my righteousness is thine to clothe thee; my Spirit is thine to lead thee; my grace is thine to enrich thee; and my glory is thine to reward thee. And, therefore, saith a gracious soul, I cannot but make a resignation of myself unto thee. "Lord, here I am, do with me as seemeth good in thine own eyes." I know the best way to have my own will is to resign up myself to thy will, and to say Amen to thy Amen.

I have read of a gentleman, who, meeting with a shepherd in a misty morning, asked him what weather it would be? It will be (saith

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*Luther.

the shepherd) what weather pleaseth me : and being corteously requested to explain his meaning, Sir, (saith he,) it shall be what weather pleaseth God, and what weather pleaseth God pleaseth me. When a christian's will is moulded into the will of God, he is sure to have his will. But,

8. Lastly, A holy, a prudent silence, includes a patient waiting upon the Lord under our afflictions, till deliverance comes. "My soul wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him, Psa. xl. 1; lxii. 5. "It is good that a man should both hope, and quietly (or, as the Hebrew hath it, silently) wait for the salvation of the Lord," Lam. iii. 26. The husbandman patiently waiteth for the precious fruits of the earth, James v. 7, 8 ; the mariner patiently waiteth for wind and tide ; and so doth the watchman for the dawning of the day ; and so doth the silent soul, in the night of adversity, patiently wait for the dawning of the day of mercy. The mercies of God are not styled the swift, but the sure mercies of David, and therefore a gracious soul waits patiently for them. And thus you see what a gracious, a prudent silence doth include.

III. The third thing is to discover what a holy, a prudent silence, under affliction, doth not exclude. Now, there are eight things that a holy patience doth not exclude.

1. A holy, a prudent silence under afflic-

tion, doth not exclude and shut out a sense and feeling of our afflictions, Psa. xxxix. Though he was dumb, and laid his hand upon his mouth, ver. 9, yet he was very sensible of his affliction: "Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand. When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity, thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth: surely every man is vanity," ver. 10, 11. He is sensible of his pain, as well as of his sin; and having prayed off his sin in the former verses, he labors here to pray off his pain. Diseases, aches, sicknesses, and pains, are all the daughters of sin; and he that is not sensible of them as the births and products of sin, doth but add to his sin, and provoke the Lord to add to his sufferings, Isa. xxvi. 10, 11. No man shall ever be charged by God for feeling his burden, if he neither fret nor faint under it; grace doth not destroy nature, but rather perfecteth it; grace is of a noble offspring, it neither turneth men into stocks or into stoics; the more grace, the more sensible of the tokens, frowns, blows, and lashes of a displeased Father. Though Calvin, under his greatest pains, was never heard to mutter or murmur, yet he was heard often to say, How long, Lord, how long? A religious commander being shot in battle, when the wound was searched, and the bullet cut out, some standing by, pitying his pains,

he replies, Though I groan, yet I bless God I do not grumble. God allows his people to groan, though not to grumble. It is a God-provoking sin, to be stupid and senseless under the afflicting hand of God. God will heat that man's furnace of affliction sevenfold hotter, who is in the furnace, but feels it not. "Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned? for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law. Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle: and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart," Isa. xlii. 24, 25. Stupidity lays a man open to the greatest fury and severity.

The physician, when he finds that the potion which he had given his patient will not work, seconds it with one more violent. If a gentle plaster will not serve, then the surgeon applies that which is more corroding; and if that will not do, then he makes use of his cauterizing knife. So when the Lord afflicts, and men feel it not; when he strikes, and they grieve not; when he wounds them, and they awake not: then the furnace is made hotter than ever; then his fury burns, then he lays on irons upon irons, bolt upon bolt, and chain upon chain, until he hath made their lives a hell. Afflictions are the saints' diet-drink; and

where do you read, in all the scripture, that ever any of the saints drank of this diet-drink, and were not sensible of it?

2. A holy, a prudent silence doth not shut out prayer for deliverance out of our affliction. Though the Psalmist lays his hand upon his mouth, in the text, yet he prays for deliverance; "Remove thy stroke away from me," ver. 10; and ver. 12, 13, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears; for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were. O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence and be no more." "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray," Jam. v. 13. "Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me," Psa. 1, 15. Times of affliction, by God's own injunction, are special times of supplication. David's heart was more often out of tune than his harp; but then he prays, and presently cries, "Return to thy rest, O my soul!" Jonah prays in the whale's belly, and Daniel prays when among the lions, and Job prays when on the dunghill, and Jeremiah prays when in the dungeon, &c.; yea, the heathen mariners, as stout as they were, when in a storm, they cry every man to his god, Jonah i. 5, 6.* To call upon God, especial-

* It is an old saying, Qui nescit orare, discat navigare: He that would learn to pray, let him go to sea.

ly in times of distress and trouble, is a lesson that the very light and law of nature teaches. The Persian messenger, (though a heathen,) as Æschylus observeth, saith thus: "When the Grecian forces hotly pursued our host, and we must needs venture over the great water Strymon, frozen then, but beginning to thaw, when a hundred to one we had all died for it: with mine eyes, saith he, I saw many of those gallants, whom I had heard before so boldly maintain there was no God, every one upon his knees, and devoutly praying that the ice might hold till they got over." And shall blind nature do more than grace? If the time of affliction be not a time of supplication, I know not what is.

There are two kinds of antidotes against all the troubles and afflictions of this life, namely, prayer and patience; the one hot, the other cold; the one quickening, the other quenching. Chrysostom understood this well enough, when he cried out, It is more bitter than death to be spoiled of prayer: and thereupon observes, that Daniel chose rather to run the hazard of his life, than to lose his prayer. Well, this is the second thing; a holy silence doth not exclude prayer. But,

3. A holy, a prudent silence doth not exclude men's being kindly affected and afflicted with their sins, as the meritorious cause of all

their sorrows and sufferings.* "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord," Lam. iii. 39, 40. "Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer; yea, twice, but I will proceed no further," Job xl. 4, 5. "I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him," Mic. vii. 9. In all our sorrows we should read our sins; and, when God's hand is upon our backs, our hands should be upon our sins.

It was a good saying of one, I hide not my sins, but I show them; I wipe them not away, but I sprinkle them; I do not excuse them, but accuse them: the beginning of my salvation is the knowledge of my transgression. When some told prince Henry, that darling of mankind, that the sins of the people brought that affliction on him; O no, said he, I have sins enough of my own to cause that. I have sinned, said David, but what have these poor sheep done? When a christian is under the afflicting hand of God, he may well say, I may thank this proud heart of mine, this worldly heart, this froward heart, this formal heart, this dull heart, this backsliding heart, this self-seeking heart of mine; for that this cup is so

* Read Ezra ix., Neh. ix., Dan. ix., Psa. li., Job vii.

bitter, this pain so grievous, this loss so great, this disease so desperate, this wound so incurable; it is mine own self, mine own sin, that hath caused these floods of sorrows to break in upon me. But,

4. A holy, a prudent silence doth not exclude the teaching and instruction of others, when we are afflicted. The words of the afflicted stick close; they many times work strongly, powerfully, and savingly, upon the souls and consciences of others. Many of Paul's epistles were written to the churches when he was in bonds, namely, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Collossians, Philemon. He begot Onesimus in his bonds, Philem. 10. And many of the brethren in the Lord waxed bold and confident by his bonds, and were confirmed, and made partakers of grace, by his ministry, when he was in bonds, Phil. i. 7. 13, 14. As the words of dying persons do many times stick and work gloriously, so many times do the words of afflicted persons work very nobly and efficaciously. I have read of one Adrianus, who, seeing the martyrs suffer such grievous things in the cause of Christ, asked, What was that which enabled them to suffer such things? and one of them named, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. ii. 9. This word was like ap-

ples of gold in pictures of silver; for it made him not only a convert, but a martyr too, Prov. xxv. 11. And this was the means of Justin Martyr's conversion, as himself confesseth. Doubtless many have been made happy by the words of the afflicted; the tongue of the afflicted hath been to many as choice silver; the words of the afflicted many times are both pleasing and profitable; they tickle the ear, and they win upon the heart; they slide insensibly into the hearers' souls, and work efficaciously upon the hearers' hearts. "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious," (or grace, as the Hebrew hath it, and so Hierom reads it,) Eccl. x. 12. The words of the mouth of the wise man are grace. They minister grace to others, and they win grace and favor from others; gracious lips make gracious hearts; gracious words are a grace, an ornament to the speaker; and they are a comfort, a delight, and an advantage to the hearer.

Now, the words of a man's mouth are never more gracious than when he is most afflicted and distressed. Now you shall find most worth and weight in his words. Now his mouth speaketh wisdom, and his tongue talketh of judgment, for the law of the Lord is in his heart, Psa. xxxvii. 31. Now his tongue is a tree of life, whose leaves are medicinal, Prov. xii. 18. As the silver trumpets sounded joy

to the Jews in the day of their gladness, Numb. x. 10, so the mouth of a wise man, like a silver trumpet, sounds joy and advantage to others in the days of his sadness.

The heathen could say, When a wise man speaketh, he openeth the rich treasures and wardrobe of his mind:—so may I say, When an afflicted saint speaks, oh! the pearls, the treasures that he scatters! But,

5. A holy, a prudent silence doth not exclude moderate mourning, or weeping, under the afflicting hand of God. "And Hezekiah wept sore;" or as the Hebrew hath it, "wept with great weeping," Isa. xxxviii. 3. But was not the Lord displeased with him for his great weeping? No: "I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years," ver. 5. God had a bottle for his tears as well as a bag for his sins. There is no water so sweet as the saints' tears, when they do not overflow the banks of moderation. Tears are not mutes; they have a voice, and their oratory is of great prevalency with the Almighty God. And, therefore, the weeping prophet calleth out for tears. "Their heart crieth unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night; give thyself no rest, let not the apple of thine eye cease," Lam. ii. 18. Upon which words, saith Bellarmine, "Cry aloud, not with thy tongue, but with

thine eyes; not with thy words, but with thy tears; for that is the prayer that maketh the most forcible entry into the ears of the great God of heaven. When God strikes, he looks that we should tremble; when his hand is lifted high, he looks that our hearts should stoop low; when he hath the rod in his hand, he looks that we should have tears in our eyes; as you may see by comparing these scriptures together, Psa. lv. 2; xxxviii. 6; Job xxx. 26—31. Good men weep easily, saith the Greek poet; and the better any are, the more inclined to weeping, especially under afflictions; as you may see in David, (whose tears, instead of gems, were the ornaments of his bed,) Jonathan, Job, Ezra, Daniel, &c. How (saith one) shall God wipe away my tears in heaven, if I shed none on earth? and how shall I reap in joy, if I sow not in tears? I was born with tears, and I shall die with tears; and why then should I live without them in this valley of tears?

There is a time to weep, as well as there is a time to laugh; a time to mourn, as well as a time to dance, Eccl. iii. 4. The mourning garment among the Jews was the black garment, and the black garment was the mourning garment. "Why go ye mourning?" Psa. xliii. 2. The Hebrew word signifies black, "Why go in black?" Sometimes christians must put off their gay ornaments, and put on their

black, their mourning garments, Exod. xxxiii. 4—6. But,

6. A gracious, a prudent silence doth not exclude sighing, groaning, or even roarings, under affliction. A man may sigh, and groan, and roar, under the hand of God, and yet be silent; it is not sighing, but muttering; it is not groaning, but grumbling; it is not roaring, but murmuring, that is opposite to holy silence. You may see much of this by comparing the following scriptures, Lam. i. 4, 11. 21, 22; Psa. xxxi. 10; Jer. xlv. 3; Exod. ii. 24; Job xxiii. 2; Psa. vi. 6. "And the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage," Exod. ii. 23. "Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee," Psa. xxxviii. 9. "By reason of the voice of my groaning, my bones cleave to my skin," Psa. cii. 5. "And my roarings are poured out like the water," Job iii. 24. "I am feeble and sore broken; I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart," Psa. xxxviii. 8. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?" Psa. xxii. 1. "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all the day long," Psa. xxxii. 3. He roars, but doth not rage; he roars, but doth not repine: when a man is in extremity, nature prompts him to roar, and the law of grace

is not against it; and though sighing, groaning, roaring, cannot deliver a man out of his misery, yet they do give some ease to a man under his misery. When Solon wept for his son's death, one said to him, Weeping will not help: he answered, Alas! therefore do I weep, because weeping will not help. So a christian many times sighs, because sighing will not help; and he groans, because groaning will not help; and he roars, because roaring will not help. Sometimes the sorrows of the saints are so great that all tears are dried up, and they can get no ease by weeping; and, therefore, for a little ease they fall a sighing and groaning; and this may be done, and yet the heart may be quiet and silent before the Lord. Peter wept and sobbed, and yet was silent. Sometimes the sighs and groans of a saint do, in some sort, tell that which his tongue can in no sort utter. But,

7. A holy, a prudent silence doth not exclude, nor shut out the use of any just or lawful means, whereby persons may be delivered out of their afflictions, 2 Kings v. 10—14; Matt. iv. 6, 7; xxii. 4, 5. 8; Luke xiv. 16—24; Acts xxvii. 24, 25. 31. God would not have his people so in love with their afflictions, as not to use such righteous means as may deliver them out of their afflictions. "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another," Matt. x. 23. When

Peter was in prison, the saints thronged together to pray, (as the original has it,) Acts xii. 12; and they were so instant and earnest with God in prayer, they did so beseech and besiege the Lord, they did so beg at heaven's gate, ver. v, that God could have no rest, till, by miracles of power and mercy, he had returned Peter as a bosom-favor to them. "And, after that many days were fulfilled, the Jews took counsel to kill him; but their lying in wait was known of Saul; and they watched the gates day and night to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket," Acts ix. 23—25. The blood of the saints is precious in God's eye, and it should not be vile in their own eyes. When Providence opens a door of escape, there is no reason why the saints should set themselves as marks and butts for their enemies to shoot at. The apostles desire the brethren "to pray for them, that they may be delivered from unreasonable men; for all men have not faith," 2 Thess. iii. 1, 2. It is a mercy worth seeking, to be delivered out of the hands of absurd, villanous, and troublesome men.

Afflictions are evil in themselves, and we may desire and endeavor to be delivered from them, James v. 14, 15; Isa. xxxviii. 18—21. Both inward and outward means are to be used for our own preservation. Had not

Noah built an ark, he had been swept away with the flood, though he had been with Nimrod and his crew on the tower of Babel.

Though we may not trust in means, yet we may, and ought to use means; in the use of them, eye that God that can only bless them, and you do your work. As a pilot that guides the ship hath his hand upon the rudder, and his eye on the star that directs him, at the same time; so, when your hand is upon the means, let your eye be upon your God, and deliverance will come. We may tempt God as well by neglecting of means, as by trusting in means. It is best to use them, and, in the use of them, to live above them. Augustine tells of a man, that, being fallen into a pit, one passing by falls a questioning of him, what he did there, and how he came in? Oh! saith the poor man, ask me not how I came in, but help me, and tell me how I may come out. The application is easy. But,

8. Lastly, A holy, a prudent silence doth not exclude a just and sober complaining against the authors, contrivers, abettors, or instruments of our afflictions. "Alexander the coppersmith did me much evil: the Lord reward him according to his works," 2 Tim. iv. 14. "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one," 2 Cor. xi. 24. They inflict, saith Maimonides, no more than forty stripes, though he be as strong as Samson;

but, if he be weak, they abate of that number. They scourged Paul with the greatest severity, in making him suffer so oft the utmost extremity of the Jewish law, when they that were weak had their punishment mitigated. "Thrice was I beaten with rods," ver. 25; that is, by the Romans, whose custom it was to beat the guilty with rods.

If Pharaoh make Israel groan, Israel may make his complaint against Pharaoh to the Keeper of Israel, Exod. ii. If the proud and blasphemous king of Assyria shall come with his mighty army to destroy the people of the Lord, Hezekiah may spread his letter of blasphemy before the Lord, Isa. xxxvii. 14—20. It was the saying of Socrates, that every man, in his life, had need of a faithful friend and a bitter enemy; the one to advise him, and the other to make him look about him: and this Hezekiah found by experience. Though Joseph's bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob, yet Joseph may say, that the archers (or the arrow-masters, as the Hebrew hath it) have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him, Gen. xlix. 23, 24. And David sadly complained of Doeg, Psa. lii. Yea, Christ himself (who was the most perfect pattern for dumbness and silence, under the sorest trials) complains against Judas, Pilate, and the rest of his persecutors, Psa.

lxix. 20—30, &c. Yea, though God will make his people's enemies to be the workmen that shall fit them and square them for his building, to be gold-smiths to add pearls to their crown, to be rods to beat off their dust, scullions to scour off their rust, fire to purge away their dross, and water to cleanse away their filthiness, fleshliness and earthliness; yet may they point at them, and pour out their complaints to God against them, Psa. cxlii. 2—7. This truth I might make good by above a hundred texts of scripture; but it is time to come to the reasons of the point.

IV. Why must christians be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and sharpest trials that they meet with in this world? I answer,

Reas. 1. That they may the better hear and understand the voice of the rod. As the word hath a voice, the Spirit a voice, and conscience a voice, so the rod hath a voice. Afflictions are the rod of God's anger, the rod of his displeasure, and his rod of revenge; he gives a commission to this rod to awaken his people, to reform his people, or else to revenge the quarrel of his covenant upon them, if they will not hear the rod, and kiss the rod, and sit mute and silent under the rod. "The Lord's voice crieth unto the city, and the man of wisdom shall see thy name: hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it," Micah vi. 9. God's rods

are not mutes, they are all vocal, they are speaking as well as smiting; every twig hath a voice. Ah, soul! saith one twig, thou sayest it smarts; well, tell me, is it good provoking a jealous God, Jer. iv. 18. Ah, soul! saith another twig, thou sayest it is bitter, it reacheth to thy heart; but hath not thine own doings procured these things? Rom. vi. 21. Ah, soul! saith another twig, where is the profit, the pleasure, the sweet, that you have found in wandering from God? Hos. iii. 7. Ah, soul! saith another twig, was it not best with you, when you were high in your communion with God, and when you were humble and close in your walking with God? Micah vi. 8. Ah, christian! saith another twig, wilt thou search thy heart, and try thy ways, and turn to the Lord thy God? Lam. iii. 40. Ah, soul! saith another twig, wilt thou die to sin more than ever? Rom. xiv. 7, 8; and to the world more than ever? Gal. vi. 14; and to relations more than ever, and to thyself more than ever? Ah, soul! saith another twig, wilt thou live more to Christ than ever, and cleave closer to Christ than ever, and prize Christ more than ever and venture further for Christ than ever? Ah, soul! saith another twig, wilt thou love Christ with a more inflamed love, and hope in Christ with a more raised hope, and depend upon Christ with a greater confidence, and wait upon Christ with more

invincible patience? &c. Now, if the soul be not mute and silent under the rod, how is it possible that it should ever hear the voice of the rod, or that it should ever hearken to the voice of every twig of the rod? The rod hath a voice that is in the hands of earthly fathers; but children hear it not, they understand it not, till they are hushed and quiet, and brought to kiss it, and sit silently under it: no more shall we hear or understand the voice of the rod that is in our heavenly Father's hand, till we come to kiss it, and sit silently under it. But,

Reas. 2. Gracious souls should be mute and silent under their greatest afflictions and sharpest trials, that they may difference and distinguish themselves from the men of the world, who usually fret and fling, mutter or murmur, curse and swagger, when they are under the afflicting hand of God. "And they shall pass through it, hardly bestead and hungry: and it shall come to pass, that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God, and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth; and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness," Isa. viii. 21, 22. Ah! how fretful and froward, how disturbed and distracted, how mad and forlorn, are these poor wretches under the rebukes of God! They look upward and downward, this way and that way, on this side

and on that, and finding no help, no succor, no support, no deliverance, like bedlams, yea, like incarnate devils, they fall upon cursing of God and their king. "We roar all like bears, and mourn sore like doves: we look for judgment, but there is none; for salvation, but it is far from us," Isa. lix. 11. They express their inward vexation and indignation, by roaring like bears. When bears are robbed of their whelps, or taken in a pit, oh how dreadfully will they roar and rage, tear and tumble!* So, when wicked persons are fallen into the pit of affliction, oh how will they roar, rage, tear, and cry out, not of their sins, but of their punishment; as Cain, "My punishment is greater than I am able to bear!" "Thy sons have fainted, they lie at the head of all the streets, as a wild bull in a net: they are full of the fury of the Lord, the rebuke of thy God," Isa. li. 20. When the huntsman hath taken the wild bull in his toil, and so entangled him that he is not able to wind himself out, oh how fierce and furious will he be! how will he spend himself in struggling and striving to get out! Such wild bulls are wicked men, when they are taken in the net of affliction.

* The bear, as Aristotle observeth, licketh her whelps into form, and loveth them beyond measure, and is most fierce, roaring, and raging, when she is robbed of them.

It is said of Marcellus, the Roman general, that he could not be quiet, neither conquered nor conqueror. It is so with wicked men, they cannot be quiet, neither full nor fasting, neither sick nor well, neither in wealth nor want, neither in bonds nor at liberty, neither in prosperity nor in adversity. "And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for dragons, an astonishment and an hissing, without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions, they shall yell as lions' whelps," Jer. li. 37, 38. When the lion roars, all the beasts of the field tremble; when the lion roars, many creatures, that could outrun him, are so amazed and astonished at the terror of his roar, that they are not able to stir from the place. Such roaring lions are wicked men, when they are under the smarting rod. They gnaw their tongues for pain, and they blaspheme the God of heaven, because of those sores, pains, and plagues, that are poured upon them; and they repented not of their deeds, to give him glory, Rev. xvi. 10, 11. And, therefore, gracious souls have cause to be silent under their sorest trials, that they may difference and distinguish themselves from wicked men, who are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt, Isa. lvii. 20. Ah! what a stir do wicked men make, when they are under the afflicting hand of God! As the sea is restless and unquiet when there is no

storm—it cannot stand still, but hath its flux and reflux—so it is much more restless, when, by tempest upon tempest, it is made to roar and rage, to foam and cast up mire and dirt. The raging sea is a fit emblem of a wicked man that is under God's afflicting hand.

Reas. 3. A third reason why gracious souls should be silent and mute, under their sharpest trials, is, that they may be conformable to Christ their Head, who was dumb and silent, under his sorest trials. "He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he openeth not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth," Isa. liii. 7. Christ was tongue-tied under all his sorrows and sufferings. "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously," 1 Pet. ii. 21—23. Christ upon the cross has not only read us a lecture of patience and silence, but has also set us a copy or pattern of both, to be transcribed and imitated by us, when we are under the smarting rod. It will be our sin and shame, if we do not bear up with patience and silence, under all our sufferings, considering what an admirable copy Christ hath set before us. The

Holy Ghost hath set before us the injuries and contumelies, the sorrows and sufferings, the pains and torments, the sweat and blood of our dearest Lord, and his invincible patience and admirable silence under all, to encourage us to imitate the Captain of our salvation, in patience and silence, under all his sufferings.

Jerom having read the life and death of Hilarion, (one that lived graciously, and died comfortably,) folded up the book, saying, Well, Hilarion shall be the champion that I will follow, his good life shall be my example, and his good death my precedent. Oh! how much more should we all say, We have read how Christ hath been afflicted, oppressed, distressed, despised, persecuted, &c. and we have read how dumb, how tongue-tied, how patient, and how silent he hath been under all. He shall be the copy which we will write after, the pattern which we will walk by, the champion which we will follow! The way to honor Christ, is, in patience and silence, to be like Christ, especially when a smarting rod is upon our backs, and a bitter cup put into our hands.

Reas. 4. A fourth reason why the people of God should be mute and silent under their afflictions, is this, because it is ten thousand times a greater judgment and affliction, to be given up to a fretful spirit, a froward spirit, a muttering or murmuring spirit, under an afflic-

tion, than it is to be afflicted. This is both the devil's sin and the devil's punishment. God is still afflicting, crossing, and vexing him, and he is still fretting, repining, vexing, and rising against God. No sin is equal to the devil's sin; no punishment to the devil's punishment. A man had better have all the afflictions of all the afflicted, throughout the world, at once upon him, than to be given up to a froward spirit, to a muttering, murmuring heart, under the least affliction. When thou seest a soul fretting, vexing, and stamping under the mighty hand of God, thou seest one of Satan's first-born, one that resembles him to the life. No child can be so like the father, much as this froward soul is like to the father of lies; though he hath been in chains almost six thousand years, yet he hath never lain still one day, nor one night, no, not one hour, in all this time; but is still fretting, vexing, tossing, and tumbling, in his chains, like a princely bedlam; he is a lion, not a lamb, a roaring lion, not a sleepy lion; not a lion standing still, but a lion going up and down; he is not satisfied with the prey he hath got, but is restless in his designs to fill hell with souls. He never wants an apple for an Eve, nor a grape for a Noah, nor a change of raiment for a Gehazi, nor a wedge of gold for an Achan, nor a crown for an Absalom, nor a bag for a Judas, nor a world for a Demas. If you look into one company, there

you shall find Satan dishing out his meat to every palate; if you look into another company, there you shall find him fitting a last to every shoe; if you look into a third company, there you shall find him suiting a garment to every back. He is under wrath, and cannot but be restless. Here with Jael, he allures with milk and murders with a nail; there, with Joab, he embraces with one hand, and stabs with another; or, with Judas, kisses and betrays; and there, with her of Babylon, he presents a golden cup with poison in it; he cannot be quiet, though his bolts be always on; and the more unquiet any are under the rebukes of God, the more such resemble Satan to the life, whose whole life is filled up with vexing and fretting against the Lord. Let not any think, saith Luther, that the devil is now dead, no, nor yet asleep; for as He that keepeth Israel, so he that hateth Israel, neither slumbereth nor sleepeth. But, in the next place,

Reas. 5. A fifth reason why gracious souls should be mute and silent, under the greatest afflictions and sharpest trials that befall them, is this, because a holy, a prudent silence under afflictions, doth best capacitate and fit the afflicted for the receipt of mercies. When the rolling bottle lies still, you may pour into it your sweetest, or your strongest waters; when the rolling, tumbling soul, lies still, then God can best pour into it the sweet waters of mercy,

and the strong waters of Divine consolation. You read of the peaceable fruits of righteousness. "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby," Heb. xii. 11. "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace," James iii. 18. The still and quiet soul is like a ship that lies still and quiet in the harbor; you may take in what goods, what commodities you please, whilst the ship lies quiet and still; so when the soul is quiet and still, under the hand of God, it is most fit to take in much of God, of Christ, of heaven, of the promises, of the ordinances, and of the love of God, the smiles of God, the communications and the counsel of God; but when souls are unquiet, they are like a ship in a storm, they can take in nothing.

Luther saith, God doth not dwell in Babylon, but in Salem. Babylon signifies confusion, and Salem signifies peace. Now, God dwells not in spirits that are unquiet, and in confusion; but he dwells in peaceable and quiet spirits. Unquiet spirits can take in neither counsel nor comfort, grace nor peace, &c. "My soul refused to be comforted," Psa. lxxvii. 2. The froward patient will take down no cordials; he hath no eye to see, nor hand to take, nor palate to relish, nor stomach

to digest any thing, that makes for his health and welfare: when a sick man is impatient, nothing will go down, the sweetest music can make no melody in his ears. "Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched-out arm, and with great judgments: and I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. And I will bring you in unto the land, concerning the which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I will give it you for an heritage: I am the Lord," Exod. vi. 6—8. The choicest cordials and comforts that heaven or earth could afford, are here held forth to them, but they have no hand to receive them. Here Moses's lips drop honey-combs, but they can taste no sweetness in them; here the best of earth and the best of heaven is set before them, but their souls are shut up, and nothing will go down; here is such ravishing music of paradise, as might abundantly delight their hearts, and please their ears, but they cannot hear; here are soul-enlivening, soul-supporting, soul-strengthening, soul-comforting, soul-raising, and soul-refreshing words, but they cannot hearken to them.

"And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel, but they hearkened not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage," ver. 9. They were under their anguish, feverish fits, and so could neither hear nor see, taste nor take in any thing that might be a mercy or a comfort to them; they were sick of impatience and discontent. And these humors being grown strong, nothing would take with them, nothing would agree with them. When persons are under strong pangs of passion, they have no ears, either for reason or religion.

Reas. 6. A sixth reason why gracious souls should be silent under the smarting rod, is this, namely, because it is fruitless, it is bootless to strive, to contest or contend with God. No man hath ever got any thing by muttering or murmuring under the hand of God, except it hath been more frowns, blows, and wounds. Such as will not lie quiet and still, when mercy hath tied them with silken cords, justice will put them in iron chains; if golden fetters will not hold you, iron shall. If bedlamites will not lie quiet, they are put into darker rooms, and heavier chains are put upon them. If Jonah will vex, and fret, and fling, justice will fling him overboard, to cool him, and quell him; and keep him prisoner in the whale's belly, till his spirit be made quiet before the Lord. "Do they provoke me to anger? saith the Lord: do they not provoke themselves

to the confusion of their own faces ?" Jer. vii. 19. By provoking of me, they do but provoke themselves ; by angering me, they do but anger themselves ; by vexing me, they do but fret and vex themselves. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy ? are we stronger than he ?" 1 Cor. x. 22.

Though God be stronger than we, yet there are those who provoke him to wrath ; and certainly there are none that do more to provoke him, than those who fume and fret when his hand is upon them. Though the cup be bitter, yet it is put into your hand by your Father ; though the cross be heavy, yet he that hath laid it on your shoulders will bear the heaviest end of it himself ; and why then should you mutter ? Shall bears and lions take blows and knocks from their keepers, and wilt thou not take a few blows and knocks from the Keeper of Israel ? Why should the clay contend with the potter, or the creature with his Creator, or the servant with his lord, or weakness with strength, or a poor nothing creature with an omnipotent God ? Can stubble stand before the fire ? can chaff abide the whirlwind ? or can a worm ward off the blow of the Almighty ? A froward and impatient spirit under the hand of God will but add chain to chain, cross to cross, yoke to yoke, and burden to burden. The more men tumble and toss in their feverish fits, the more they strengthen

their distemper, and the longer it will be before the cure be effected. The easiest and the surest way of cure, is to lie still and quiet. where patience hath its perfect work, there the cure will be certain and easy; when a man hath his broken leg set, he lies still and quiet, and so his cure is easily and speedily wrought; but when a horse's leg is set, he frets and flings, he flounces and flies out, unjointing it again and again, and so his cure is the more difficult and tedious. Such christians that, under the hand of God, are like the horse or mule, fretting and flinging, will but add to their own sorrows and sufferings, and put the day of their deliverance further off.

Reas. 7. A seventh reason why christians should be mute and silent under their afflictions, is, because hereby they shall cross and frustrate Satan's great design and expectation. In all the afflictions he brought upon Job, his design was not so much to make Job a beggar, as it was to make him a blasphemer; it was not so much to make Job outwardly miserable, as it was to make Job inwardly miserable, by occasioning him to mutter and murmur against the righteous hand of God, that so he might have had some matter of accusation against him to the Lord. He is the unwearied accuser of the brethren: "The accuser of the brethren is cast down, which accuseth them before our God day and night," Rev. xii. 10. Satan is

the great make-hate between God and his children; he hath a mint constantly going in hell, where, as an untired mint-master, he is still coining and hammering out accusations against the saints. First, he tempts and allures souls to sin, and then accuses them of those very sins he hath tempted them to, that so he may disgrace them before God, and bring them, if it were possible, out of favor with God; though he knows beforehand, that God and his people are, by the bond of the covenant, and by the blood of the Redeemer, so closely united, that they can never be severed. Could he but have made Job froward or fretful under the rod, he would have quickly carried the tidings to heaven, and asked God whether this was becoming such a person of whom He had given such a glorious character. Satan knows that there is more evil in the least sin, than there is in all the afflictions that can be inflicted upon a person. If he could have made Job a mutineer, he would quickly have pleaded for martial law to have been executed upon him. That devil that accused God to man, Gen. iii. and Christ to be an impostor, will not fail to accuse the saints when they miscarry under the rod. The best way to outwit the devil, is to be silent under the hand of God; he that mutters is foiled by him; but he that is mute overcomes him; and to conquer a devil, is more than to conquer a world.

Reas. 8. The eighth and last reason why christians should be silent and mute under their sorest trials, is this, that they may be conformable to those noble patterns that are set before them by other saints, who have been patient and silent under the smarting rod; as Aaron, Lev. x. 3; Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18; David, 2 Sam. xvi. 7—13; Job, chap. i. 21, 22; Eliakim, Shebna, and Joah, Isa. xxxvi. 11, 12. So those saints in Acts xxi. 12—14, and that cloud of witnesses pointed at in Heb. xii. 1. Gracious examples are more awakening, more convincing, more provoking, and more encouraging, than precepts, because in them we see that the exercise of grace and godliness is possible, though it be difficult. When we see christians that are subject to like infirmities with ourselves, mute and silent under the afflicting hand of God, we see that it is possible that we may attain to the same noble temper of being tongue-tied under a smarting rod. Certainly it is our greatest honor and glory in this world, to be eyeing and imitating the highest and worthiest examples. What Plutarch said of Demosthenes, that he was excellent at praising the worthy acts of his ancestors, but not so at imitating them, may be said of many in these days. They are very forward and excellent at praising the patience of Job, but not at imitating it; at praising the silence of Aaron, but not at imitating it; at praising David's dumb-

ness, but not at imitating it; at praising Eli's muteness, but not at imitating it. It was the height of Cesar's glory to walk in the steps of Alexander; and of Selymus, a Turkish emperor, to walk in Cesar's steps; and of Themistocles, to walk in the steps of Miltiades. Oh! how much more should we account it our highest glory to imitate the examples of those worthies, of whom this world is not worthy! It speaks much of God within, when men are striving to write after the fairest copies. And thus much for the reasons of the point. I come now to the application.

You see, beloved, by what has been said, That it is the great duty and concernment of christians, to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and the sharpest trials, that they may meet with in this world.

If this be so, then this truth looks sadly upon several sorts of persons. As,

1. This looks sadly upon murmurers, upon such as do nothing but mutter and murmur under the afflicting hand of God. This was Israel's sin of old, Exod. xvi. 6—9; Numb. xiv. 27. 29; chap. xvii. 5. 10; Exod. xv. 24; Deut. i. 27; Psa. cvi. 25; and this is our sin at this day. Ah! what murmuring is there against God, against instruments, and against providences, to be found amongst us! Some murmur at what they have lost, others

murmur at what they fear they shall lose; some murmur that they are no higher, others murmur because they are so low; some murmur because such a party rules, and others murmur because themselves are not in the saddle; some murmur because their mercies are not so many as others; and others murmur because their mercies are not as others are; some murmur because they are afflicted, and others murmur because such and such are not afflicted as well as they. Hadst thou no more sins upon thee, perhaps thy murmuring were enough to undo thee, did not God exercise much pity and compassion toward thee.

2. This truth looks sadly upon those that fret, chafe, and vex, when they are under the afflicting hand of God. Many, when they feel the rod smart, ah, how do they fret and fume! "When they are hardly bestead and hungry, they fret themselves, and curse their king and their God," Isa. viii. 21. "The foolishness of man perverteth his way; and his heart fretteth against the Lord," Prov. xix. 3. The heart may be fretful and froward, when the tongue doth not blaspheme. Folly brings man into misery, and misery makes man to fret, 2 Kings vi. 33; Psa. xxxvii. 1. 7, 8. Man in misery is more apt to fret and chafe against the Lord, than to fret and chafe against his sin that hath brought him into sufferings. A fretful soul dares attack God himself.

When Pharoah is troubled and frets, he dare fly in the very face of God himself: "Who is the Lord that I should obey him?" And when Jonah is in a fretting humor, he dares tell God to his face, that he doth well to be angry, Jonah, iv. 8, 9. Jonah had done well, if he had been angry with his sin; but he did very ill to be angry with his God. God will vex every vein in that man's heart, before he hath done with him, who fumes and frets, because he cannot snap asunder the cords with which he is bound, Ezek. xvi. 43. Sometimes good men are sick of the frets; but when they are, it costs them dear, as Job and Jonah found by experience. No man hath ever got any thing by his fretting and flinging, except it hath been harder blows, or heavier chains; therefore fret not when God strikes.

3. This truth looks sadly upon those who charge God foolishly in the day of their adversity: "Why doth a living man complain?" Lam. iii. 39. He that hath deserved a hanging, hath no reason to charge the judge with cruelty, if he escape with a whipping; and we that have deserved condemnation, have no reason to charge God for being too severe, if we escape with a fatherly lashing. Rather than a man will take the blame, and quietly bear the shame of his own folly, he will put it off upon God himself, Gen. iii. 12. It is a very evil thing, when we accuse God. hat we may ex-

cuse ourselves, and lay the fault any where rather than upon our own hearts and ways. Job was a man of a more noble spirit: "In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly," Job. i. 22. When God charges many men home, then they presently charge God foolishly, they put him to bear the brunt and blame of all; but this will be bitterness in the end. When thou art under affliction, thou mayst humbly tell God, that thou feelest his hand heavy; but thou must not blame him because his hand is heavy. No man hath ever been able to make good a charge against God; and wilt thou be able? Surely no. By charging God foolishly in the day of thy calamity, thou dost but provoke the Lord to charge thee through and through, more fiercely and furiously, with his most deadly darts of renewed misery. It is thy greatest wisdom to blame thy sins, and lay thy hand upon thy mouth; for why should folly charge innocence? That man is far enough off from being mute and silent under the hand of God, who dares charge God himself for laying his hand upon him. But,

4. This truth looks sadly upon such as will not be silent nor satisfied under the afflicting hand of God, except the Lord will give them the particular reasons why he lays his hand upon them. Good men sometimes dash their feet against this stumbling stone. "Why is

my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable?" Jer. xv. 18. Though God hath always reason for what he doth, yet he is not bound to show us the reasons of his doings. Jeremiah's passion was up, his blood was hot, and now nothing will silence or satisfy him, but the reasons why his pain was perpetual, and his wound incurable. So Job, chap. vii. 20. "Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself?" It is an evil and a dangerous thing to cavil at, or to question, his proceedings, Rom. ix. 20; Dan. iv. 34, 35, who is the chief Lord of all, and who may do with his own what he pleaseth. He is unaccountable and uncontrollable; and therefore who shall say, What dost thou? As no man may question his right to afflict him, nor his righteousness in afflicting him; so no man may question the reasons why he afflicts him. As no man can compel him to give a reason of his doings, so no man may dare to ask him the particular reasons of his doings. Kings think themselves not bound to give their subjects a reason for their doings, Eccl. viii. 4; and shall we bind God to give us a reason of his doings, who is King of kings and Lord of lords, and whose will is the true reason and only rule of justice? The general grounds and reasons that God hath laid down in his word, why he afflicts his people, as, namely, for their profit, Heb. xii. 10, for the purging

away of their sins, Isa. i. 25, for the reforming of their lives, Ps. cxix. 67, 71, and for the saving of their souls, 1 Cor. xi. 32, should work them to be silent, and satisfied under all their afflictions; though God should never satisfy their curiosity in giving them an account of some more hidden causes, which may lie secret in the abyss of his eternal knowledge and infallible will. Curiosity is the spiritual drunkenness of the soul; and as the drunkard will never be satisfied, be the cup ever so deep, unless he sees the bottom of it; so some curious christians, whose souls are overspread with the leprosy of curiosity, will never be satisfied till they come to see the bottom, and the most secret reasons of all God's dealings towards them; but they are the greatest fools, who affect to know more than God would have them. Did not Adam's curiosity render him and his posterity fools? As a man by gazing and prying into the body of the sun, may grow dark and dim, and see less than otherwise he might; so many by a curious prying into the secret reasons of God's dealings with them, come to grow so dark and dim, that they cannot see those plain reasons which God hath laid down in his word, why he afflicts and tries the children of men.

I have read of one Sir William Champney, (in the reign of King Henry III.) once living in Tower-street, London, who was the first

man that ever built a turret on the top of his house, that he might the better overlook all his neighbors; but so it fell out, that, not long after, he was struck blind; so that he who could not be satisfied to see as others did see, but would needs see more than others, saw just nothing at all, through the just judgment of God upon him. And so it is a just and righteous thing with God to strike such with spiritual blindness, who will not be satisfied with seeing the reasons laid down in the word why he afflicts them, but they must be curiously prying and searching into the hidden and more secret reasons of his severity towards them. Ah, christians, it is your wisdom and duty to sit silent and mute under the afflicting hand of God, upon the account of revealed reasons, without making any curious inquiry into those more secret reasons, that are locked up in the golden cabinet of God's own breast, Deut. xxix. 29.

5. This truth looks sadly upon those who, instead of being silent and mute under their afflictions, use sinful ways to get out of their troubles; who care not though they break with God, with men, and with their own consciences, so that they may but break off the chains that are upon them; who care not by what means the prison door is opened, so they may but escape; nor by what hands their bolts are knocked off, so they may be at liberty.

"Take heed, regard not iniquity; for this hast thou chosen rather than affliction," Job xxxvi. 21. He makes but an ill choice who chooses sin rather than suffering; and yet, such an ill choice good men have sometimes made, when troubles have compassed them round about. Though no lion roars like that in a man's own bosom, conscience; yet some, to deliver themselves from troubles without, have set that lion a roaring within; some to deliver themselves from outward tortures, have put themselves under inward torments. He purchases his freedom from affliction at too dear a rate, who buys it with the loss of a good name, or a good conscience.

Now, because there is even in good men sometimes too great an aptness and proneness to sin, and shift themselves out of afflictions, when they should rather be mute and silent under them, give me leave to lay down these considerations to prevent it.

(1.) Consider, that there is infinitely more evil in the least sin, Jam. iii. 5—10, than there is in the greatest miseries and afflictions that can possibly come upon you; yea, there is more evil in the least sin, than there is in all the troubles that ever came upon the world, Prov. viii. 36; 1 John iii. 4; Rev. xxi. 8; yea, than there is in all the miseries and torments of hell. The least sin is an offence to the great God, it is wrong to the immortal

soul. It is a breach of a righteous law, it cannot be washed away but by the blood of Jesus, it can shut the soul out of heaven, and shut the soul up a close prisoner in hell for ever and ever. If you consider sin strictly, there cannot be any little sin, no more than there can be a little God, a little hell, or a little damnation; yet, comparatively, some sins may be said to be little. The least sin is rather to be avoided and prevented, than the greatest sufferings. If this cockatrice be not crushed in the egg, it will soon become a serpent, the very thought of sin, if indulged in, will break forth into action, action into custom, custom into habit, and then both body and soul are lost irrecoverably, to all eternity. The least sin is very dangerous. The least spark may consume the greatest house, and the least leak sink the greatest ship. A little postern opened may betray the greatest city. A dram of poison diffuseth itself to all parts, till it strangle the vital spirits, and turn out the soul from the body. If the serpent can but wriggle in by an evil thought, he will soon make surprisal of the soul; as you see in that great instance of Adam and Eve. The trees of the forest, saith one in a parable, held a solemn parliament, wherein they consulted of the innumerable wrongs which the axe had done them; therefore they made an act, that no tree should hereafter lend the axe a helve, on pain of being cut down. The axe travels up

and down the forest, begs wood of the cedar, oak, ash, elm, even of the poplar; not one would lend him a chip. At last he desired so much as would serve him to cut down the briers and bushes, alleging, that such shrubs as they did but suck away the juice of the ground, and hinder the growth and obscure the glory of the fair and goodly trees. Hereupon they were all content to afford him so much: he pretends a thorough reformation, but, behold a sad deformation; for when he had got his helve, down went both cedar, oak, ash, elm, and all that stood in his way. Such are the subtle reaches of sin, that it will promise to remove the briars and bushes of afflictions and troubles, that hinder the soul of that juice, sweetness, comfort, delight, and content, that it might otherwise enjoy. But now yield a little to it, and, instead of removing your troubles, it will cut down your peace, your hopes, your comforts, yea, it will cut down your precious souls. What is the breathing of a vein to the being let blood in the throat? or a scratch in the hand to a stab at the heart? No more are the greatest afflictions to the least sins; and therefore, christians, never use sinful shifts to get yourselves out of troubles, but rather be mute and silent under them, till the Lord shall work out your deliverance from them. But,

(2.) Consider, it is an impossible thing for

any to sin themselves out of their troubles. Abraham, Job, and Jonah attempted it, but could not effect it. The devils have experienced this nearly six thousand years; they had not been now in chains could they but have sinned themselves out of their chains: could the condemned sin themselves out of everlasting burnings, Isa. xxxiii. 14, there would have been none now roaring, in that devouring, unquenchable fire; hell would have no inhabitants could they but sin themselves out of it. Ah, christians! devils and condemned spirits shall as soon sin themselves out of hell, as you shall be able to sin yourselves out of your afflictions. Christians, you shall as soon stop the sun from running her course, contract the sea in a nutshell, compass the earth with a span, and raise the dead at your pleasure, as ever you shall be able to sin yourselves out of your sufferings; and, therefore, it is better to be silent and quiet under them, than to attempt that which it is impossible to accomplish. The second consideration will receive further confirmation by the next particular.

(3.) As it is an impossible thing, so it is a very prejudicial, a very dangerous thing, to attempt to sin yourselves out of your troubles; for, by attempting to sin yourselves out of one trouble, you will sin yourselves into many troubles, as Jonah did; by laboring to sin yourselves out of less troubles, you will sin

yourselves into greater troubles, as Saul did; and, by endeavoring to sin yourselves from under outward troubles, you will sin yourselves under inward troubles and distresses, which are the sorest and saddest of all troubles. Some there have been, who, by laboring to sin themselves out of their present sufferings, have sinned themselves under such horrors and terrors of conscience, that they could neither eat, nor drink, nor sleep, but have been ready to lay violent hands upon themselves.

Cyprian, in his sermon *De lapsis*, speaks of divers, who, forsaking the faith to avoid sufferings, were given over to be possessed of evil spirits, and died fearfully. Oh, man! thou dost not know what deadly sin, what deadly temptation, what deadly judgment, what deadly stroke, thou mayst fall under, who attemptest to sin thyself out of troubles. What is it to take Venice, and be hanged at the gates thereof? It is better to be silent and mute under thy afflictions, than, by using sinful shifts, to sin thyself under greater afflictions.

(4.) Consider, it is a very ignoble and unworthy thing, to go to sin yourselves out of your troubles and straits; it argues a poor, a low, a weak, a dastardly, and an effeminate spirit, to use base shifts, to shuffle yourselves out of your troubles. Men of noble, courageous, and magnanimous spirits, will disdain and scorn it; as you may see in the three He-

brews, Dan. iii. 8–30, and in Daniel, and those worthies, in the 11th of the Hebrews, of whom this world was not worthy. Jerome writes of a brave woman, who, being upon the rack, bade her persecutors do their worst, for she was resolved to die, rather than lie. And the prince of Condé being taken prisoner by Charles IX. king of France, and put to his choice, whether he would go to mass, or be put to death, or suffer perpetual imprisonment, his noble answer was, That, by God's help, he would never choose the first, and, for either of the latter, he left it to the king's pleasure and God's providence.

A soul truly noble, will sooner part with all than the peace of a good conscience. Thus, blessed Hooper desired to be rather discharged of his bishopric, than yield to certain ceremonies.

I have read of Marcus Arethusus, an eminent servant of the Lord in gospel work, who, in the time of Constantine, had been the cause of overthrowing an idol temple; but Julian, coming to be emperor, commanded the people of that place to build it up again. All were ready so to do, only he refused it; whereupon his own people, to whom he had preached, fell upon him, stript off all his clothes, then abused his naked body, and gave it up to children and schoolboys to be lanced with their penknives; but, when all this would not do, they caused

him to be set in the sun, his naked body anointed all over with honey, that so he might be bitten and stung to death by flies and wasps; and all this cruelty they exercised on him, because he would not do any thing towards the rebuilding of that idol temple, nay, they came so far, that, if he would give but one half penny towards the charge, they would release him; but he refused it with a noble christian disdain, though the advancing of one half penny might have saved his life. And, in so doing, he did but live up to that noble principle that most commend, but few practise, namely, That christians must choose rather to suffer the worst of torments, than to commit the least of sins, whereby God should be dishonored, his name blasphemed, religion reproached, profession scorned, weak saints discouraged, and men's consciences wounded, and their souls endangered. Now, tell me, christians, is it not better to be silent and mute under your sorest trials and troubles, than to labor by sin to shift yourselves out of them, and so proclaim to all the world that you are persons of very low, poor, and ignoble spirits? But,

(5.) Consider, sinful shifts and means God hath always cursed and blasted. Achan's golden wedge was but a wedge to cleave him, and his garment a shroud to shroud him. Ahab purchases a vineyard with the blood of the owner, but presently it was watered with his own blood,

according to the word of the Lord. Gehazi must needs have a talent of silver, and two changes of raiment, and that with a lie. Well, he hath them, and he hath with them a leprosy that cleaved to him and his seed forever, 2 Kings v. 20—27. With those very hands that Judas took money to betray his master, he fitted a halter to hang himself. The rich and wretched glutton fared delicately, and went bravely every day, but the next news you hear of him is of his being in hell, crying out for a drop, who, when he was on earth, would not give a crumb.

The coal that the eagle carried from the altar to her nest, set all on fire.

Crassus did not long enjoy the fruit of his covetousness, for the Parthians taking him, poured melted gold down his throat.

Dionysius did not long enjoy the fruit of his sacrilege and tyranny; for he was glad to change his sceptre into a ferula, and turn school-master for his maintenance. Ah, christians, christians! is it not far better to sit quiet and silent under your afflictions, than to use such sinful shifts and means, which God will certainly blast and curse? But,

(6.) Lastly, consider this, that your very attempting to sin and shift yourselves out of troubles and afflictions will cost you dear; *

* A man may buy any thing too dear, but Christ, grace, his own soul, and the gospel.

it will cost you many prayers, many tears, many sighs, many groans, many terrors, and many horrors. Peter by attempting to sin himself out of trouble, sins himself into a sea of sorrows; "He went forth, and wept bitterly," Matt. xxvi. 75.

Were David, Jacob, and Jonah now alive, they would tell you that they have found this to be a truth in their own experience. Oh, christians! it is far better to be quiet and silent under your sufferings, than to pay so dear for attempting to sin and shift yourselves out of your sufferings. A man will not buy gold too dear, and why, then, should he buy himself out of troubles at too dear a rate?

But now I shall come to that use that I intend to insist most upon, and that is, a use of exhortation. Seeing it is the great duty and concernment of christians to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and the sharpest trials that they meet with in this world, oh! that I could prevail with you, christians, to mind this great duty, and to live up, and to live out, this necessary truth; which that I may, give me leave to propound some considerations to engage your souls to be mute and silent under your greatest troubles, and your saddest trials. To that purpose,

1. Consider the greatness, sovereignty, majesty, and dignity of God, and let that move thee to silence. "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the ends of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth," Ps. xlvi. 8—18. Who can cast his eye upon the greatness of God, the majesty of God, and not sit still before him? "Hold thy peace at the presence of the Lord God," Zeph. i. 7. Oh murmur not, fret not, but stand mute before him! Shall the child be hushed before his father, the servant before his master, the subject before his prince, and the guilty person before the judge, when he majestically rises off his judgment-seat, and composes his countenance into an aspect of terror and severity, that his sentence may fall upon the offender with the greater dread? And shall not a christian be quiet before that God, that can bathe his sword in heaven, and burn the chariots on earth? Nay, shall the sheep be hushed before the wolf, birds before the hawk, and all the beasts of the field before the lion, and shall not we be hushed and quiet before him who is the Lion of the tribe of Judah? Rev. v. 5. God is mighty in power, and mighty in counsel, and mighty

in working, and mighty in punishing; and, therefore, be silent before him. Moses, magnifying his might, saith, "Who is like unto thee among the gods?" Now, certainly, this epithet should be a mighty motive to work souls to that which Habakkuk persuades to, "The Lord is in his holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before him," chap. ii. 20. Oh, my brethren! shall not the brightness and splendor of the majesty of the great God, whose sparkling glory and majesty dazzle the eyes of angels, and make those princes of glory stand mute before him, move you to silence, to hold your peace, and lay your hand upon your mouth? Surely yes. But,

2. Consider that all your afflictions, troubles, and trials, shall work for your good. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God," Rom. viii. 28. Why then should you fret, fling, and fume, seeing God designs your good in all? Afflictions are blessings. Doubtless, Manasseh would not exchange the good he got by his iron chains, for all the gold chains that are in the world. The bee sucks sweet honey out of the bitterest herbs; so God will, by afflictions, teach his children to suck sweet knowledge, sweet obedience, sweet experience, &c. out of all the bitter afflictions and trials he exercises them with; that scouring and rubbing which frets others, shall make them shine the brighter;

that weight which crushes and keeps others under, shall but make them, like the palm-tree, grow better and higher; and that hammer which knocks others all in pieces, shall but knock them the nearer to Christ the Corner-stone. Stars shine brightest in the darkest night, torches give the best light when beaten, grapes yield most wine when most pressed, spices smell sweetest when pounded, vines are the better for bleeding, gold looks the brighter for scouring, juniper smells sweetest in the fire, and camomile the more you tread it, the more you spread it. Afflictions are the saints' best benefactors. Where afflictions hang heaviest, corruptions hang loosest. Grace that is hid in nature, as sweet water in rose-leaves, is then most fragrant, when the fire of affliction is put under to distil it out. Grace shines the brighter for scouring, and is most glorious when it is most clouded.

In the sea of afflictions God will make his people stand like a rock; they shall be immovable, and invincible; and the more the waves of afflictions beat upon them, the better they shall be, the more they shall thrive in grace and godliness. Now, how should this engage christians to be mute and silent under all their troubles and trials in this world, considering that they shall all work for their good!! God chastises our carcases, to heal our consciences; he afflicts our bodies to save our souls; he gives us gall and wormwood here, that the

pleasures that are at his right hand may be the more sweet hereafter; here he lays us upon a bed of thorns, that we may look and long more for that easy bed of down in heaven.

As there is a curse wrapt up in the best things he gives the wicked, so there is a blessing wrapt up in the worst things he brings upon his own. As there is a curse wrapt up in a wicked man's health, so there is a blessing wrapt up in a godly man's sickness. As there is a curse wrapt up in a wicked man's strength, so there is a blessing wrapt up in a godly man's weakness. As there is a curse wrapt up in a wicked man's wealth, so there is a blessing wrapt up in a godly man's wants. As there is a curse wrapt up in a wicked man's honor, so there is a blessing wrapt up in a godly man's reproach. As there is a curse wrapt up in all a wicked man's mercies, so there is a blessing wrapt up in all a godly man's crosses, losses, and changes; and why then should he not sit mute and silent before the Lord? But,

3. Consider, that a holy silence is that excellent, precious grace, that lends a hand of support to every grace. Silence is the keeper of all other virtues; it lends a hand to faith, to hope, to love, to humility, to self-denial, &c. A holy silence hath its influence upon all other graces; it causes the rose-buds of grace to blossom and bud forth. Silence is a grace that keeps a man gracious in all conditions; in every condition silence is the christian's righ

hand; in prosperity, it bears the soul up under all the envy, malice, hatred, and censures of the world; in adversity, it bears the soul up under all the neglect, scorn, and contempt that a christian meets with in the world; it makes every bitter sweet, every burden light, and every yoke easy. No man honors God, no man justifies God, at so high a rate, as he who lays his hand upon his mouth, when the rod of God is upon his back. But,

4. To move you to silence under your sorest and your sharpest trials, consider that you have deserved greater and heavier afflictions than those you are under. Hath God taken away one mercy? Thou hast deserved to be stript of all. Hath he taken away the delight of thine eyes? He might have taken away the delight of thy soul. Art thou under outward wants? Thou hast deserved to be under outward and inward together. Art thou cast upon a sick-bed? Thou hast deserved a bed in hell. Art thou under this ache and that pain? Thou hast deserved to be under all aches and pains at once. Hath God chastised thee with whips? Thou hast deserved to be chastised with scorpions. Art thou fallen from the highest pinnacle of honor, to be the scorn and contempt of men? Thou hast deserved to be scorned and contemned by God and angels. Art thou under a severe whipping? Thou hast deserved an utter condem-

nation. Ah, christians! let but your eyes be fixed upon your demerits, and your hands will be quickly upon your mouths. Whatever is less than a final separation from God, whatever is less than hell, is mercy; and therefore you have cause to be silent under the smartest dealings of God with you. But,

5. Consider, a quiet, silent spirit is of great esteem with God; God sets the greatest value upon persons of a quiet spirit: "But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price," 1 Pet. iii. 4. A quiet spirit is a spark of the Divine nature; it is a ray, a beam of glory; it is a heaven born spirit. No man is born with a holy silence in his heart, as he is born with a tongue in his mouth. This is a flower of paradise, it is a precious gem that God makes very great reckoning of. A quiet spirit speaks a man most like to God, it capacitates a man for communion with God, it renders a man most serviceable to God, and it obliges a man to most accurate walking with God. A meek and quiet spirit is an incorruptible ornament, much more valuable than gold.

There is a natural quietness, which proceeds from a good temper and constitution of body.

There is a moral quietness, which proceeds from good education and breeding, from good injunctions, instructions, and examples.

There is an artificial quietness. Some have an art to imprison their passions, and to lay a law of restraint upon their anger and wrath when they are all in a flame within; as you may see in Cain, Esau, Absalom, and Joab, who for a time cast a close cloak over their malice, when their hearts were set on fire of hell.

There is a gracious quietness, which is of the spirit's infusion, Gal. v. 22—25. Now this quietness of spirit, this spiritual frame of heart, is of great price in the sight of God. God values it above the world; and therefore who would not covet it more than the world, yea, more than life itself? Certainly, the great God sets a great price upon nothing but that which is of an invaluable price. What stretching, struggling, and striving, is there for those things that the great ones of the earth highly prize! Ah, what stretching of wits, interests, and consciences is there this day, to gain and hold up that which justice will cast down! How much better would it be, if all persons would in good earnest struggle and strive, even as for life, after a quiet and silent spirit, which the great and glorious God sets so great a price upon! This is a pearl of greatest price; and happy is he that purchases it, though it were with the loss of all. But,

6. Consider that if you sit not silent and quiet under your greatest troubles and your sorest trials, you will be found fighters against

your own prayers. How often have you prayed that the will of God may be done ; yea, that it may be done on the earth, as the angels do it now in heaven! When troubles and afflictions come upon you, the will of God is done, his will is accomplished, why, then, should you fret, fling, and fume, and not rather quietly lie down in his will, whose will is a perfect, just, and righteous will, a wise as well as a sovereign will, a holy, immutable, uncontrollable, an omnipotent and eternal will? Certainly, you will but add affliction to affliction, by fighting against your own prayers, and by fretting and vexing yourselves, when the will of God is done. It is sad to see a man fight against his friends; it is sadder to see him fight against his relations ; it is saddest of all, to see him fight against his prayers. And yet this every christian doth, who murmurs and mutters when the rod of God is upon him, as those do who pray that the will of God may be done, and yet when his will is done upon them, they are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, they are still fretting against the Lord. Ah, christians! have you not sins and temptations to fight against, and a devil, yea, a whole world to fight against? why then should you be found fighting against your own prayers? But,

7. Consider, a holy silence, under the heaviest burdens, the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences and changes, will make all

tolerable and easy to a christian. Those burdens and troubles that will break a froward man's back, will not so much as break a silent man's sleep; those afflictions that lie as heavy weights upon a murmurer, will lie as light as a feather upon a mute christian; that bed of sorrow, which is as a bed of thorns to a fretful soul, will be as a bed of down to a silent soul. A holy silence unstings every affliction, it takes off the weight of every burden, it adds sweet to every bitter, it changes dark nights into sun-shine days, and terrible storms into desirable calms. The smallest sufferings will easily vanquish an unquiet spirit; but a quiet spirit will as easily triumph over the greatest sufferings. As little mercies are great mercies, so great sufferings are but little sufferings in the eye of a silent soul. The silent soul never complains that his affliction is too great, his burden too heavy, his cross too weighty, his sufferings too many; silence makes him victorious over all. And, therefore, as ever you would have heavy afflictions light, and be able to bear a burden with ease, labor as for life after this holy silence. But,

8. Consider, that a holy silence under afflictions will be your best armour of proof against those temptations that afflictions may expose you to. Times of affliction often prove times of great temptation; and therefore afflictions are called temptations: "Blessed is the man

which endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life," James i. 12. The Greek word is to be understood of temptations of probation, of afflicting temptations, and not of temptations of suggestion, of seduction; for they are not to be endured, but resisted and abhorred. Now, affliction is called temptation,

(1.) Because, as temptation tries what metal a christian is made of, so do afflictions.

(2.) Because, as Satan usually hath a great hand in all the temptations that come upon us, so he hath a great hand in all the afflictions that befall us; as you see in the instance of Job.

(3.) Because, as temptations drive to God, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8, so do afflictions, Isa. xxvi. 16; Hos. v. 15.

(4.) But mainly, because Satan chooses times of affliction as the fittest seasons for his temptations. When Job was sorely afflicted in his estate, children, wife, life, then Satan lets fly, and makes his fiercest assaults upon him. Now Satan tempts him to entertain hard thoughts of God, to distrust, to impatience, to murmuring and muttering. As when Israel was feeble, faint, and weary, Amalek assaulted them, and smote the hindmost of them, Deut. xxv. 17, 18, so when christians are most afflicted, then usually they are most tempted.

Many saints have experienced this when they have been upon their sick and dying beds.

Luther found this by experience, when he said, "I am without set upon by all the world; and within, by the devil and all his angels." Satan is a coward, and loves to strike us, and trample upon us, when afflictions have cast us down. When besieged towns, cities, and castles, are in great straits and troubles, the besiegers make their fiercest assaults; so when christians are under the greatest straits and trials, then Satan assaults them most, like a roaring lion. Now silence under afflictions is the best antidote and preservative against all those temptations that afflictions lay us open to. Silence under afflictions is a christian's armour of proof; it is that shield, that no spear or dart of temptation can pierce. Whilst a christian lies quiet under the rod, he is safe. Satan may tempt him, but he will not conquer him; he may assault him, but he cannot vanquish him. Satan may entice him to use sinful shifts, to get out of trouble; but he will choose rather to lie, yea, die in trouble, then to get out upon Satan's terms. But,

9. Consider, that holy silence under afflictions and trials will give a man a quiet and peaceable possession of his own soul; "In patience possess your souls," Luke xxi. 19. Now, next to the possession of God, the possession of a man's own soul is the greatest

mercy in this world. A man may possess honors and riches, and dear relations, and the favor and assistance of friends under his trials; but he will never come to a possession of his own soul under his troubles, till he comes to be mute, and to lay his hand upon his mouth. Now, what are all earthly possessions to the possession of a man's own soul? He that possesses himself, possesses all; he that possesses not himself, possesses nothing at all; he possesses not the use, the sweet, the comfort, the good, the blessing, of any thing he enjoys, who enjoys not himself. That man who is not master of himself, is master of nothing. Holy silence gives a man the greatest mastery over his own spirit; and mastery over a man's own spirit is the greatest mastery in the world, Prov. xvi. 32. A holy silence will give a man such a quiet possession of his own soul, that all the storms of affliction shall not move him; it will make him stand like a rock in the sea of troubles. Let a man but quietly possess himself, and troubles will never trouble him. But,

10. Consider the commands and injunctions that God in his word hath laid upon you to be silent, to be mute and quiet under all the troubles, trials, and changes, that have passed or may pass upon you. "Be silent, O all flesh, before the Lord: for he is raised up out of his holy habitation," Zech. ii. 13. "Keep silence before me, O islands," Isa. xli. 1.

"The Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before him," Hab. ii. 20. "Therefore the prudent shall keep silence in that time, for it is an evil time," Amos v. 13. "Be still, and know that I am God," Ps. xlvi. 10. "Commune with your heart, and be still," Ps. iv. 4. "Stand still, and see the salvation of God," Exod. xiv. 13. "Stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem," 2 Chron. xx. 17. "Hearken unto this, O Job: stand still and consider the wonderous works of God," Job xxxvii. 14. It is a dangerous thing for us to neglect one of his commands, who by another is able to command us into nothing, or into hell, at pleasure; to act or run cross to God's express command, though under pretence of revelation from God, is as much as a man's life is worth; as you may see in that sad story, 1 Kings xiii. 24, &c. Divine commands must be put in speedy execution, without denying or delaying, without debating or disputing the difficulties that may attend our subjection to them. God's commands are spiritual, holy, just, and good, Rom. vii. 12—14, and therefore to be obeyed without muttering or murmuring. Divine commands are backed with the strongest reasons, and attended with the highest encouragements. Shall the servant readily obey the commands of his master, the subject the commands of his prince,

the soldier the commands of his general, the child the commands of his father, the wife the commands of her husband; and shall not a christian as readily obey the commands of his Saviour? Nay, shall vain men readily and willingly obey the sinful and senseless commands of men; and shall not we be willing to obey the commands of God? "Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, Mark ye now when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say unto you, Smite Amnon, then kill him, fear not; have not I commanded you? be courageous, and be valiant. And the servants of Absalom did unto Amnon as Absalom had commanded," 2 Sam. xiii. 28, 29. They did not hesitate to obey the bloody commands of Absalom, against all law, reason, and religion.

I have read of one Johannus Abbas, who willingly fetched water near two miles every day for a whole year together, to pour upon a dry stick, upon the bare command of his confessor.

I have also read of the old kings of Peru, that they were wont to use a tassel or fringe made of red wool, which they wore upon their heads, and when they sent any governor to rule in any part of their country, they delivered unto him one of the threads of the tassel, and for one of those simple threads he was as much obeyed as if he had been the

king himself. Now shall one single thread be more forcible to draw infidels to obedience than all those golden commands last cited shall be to draw you to be quiet and silent under the troubles and changes you meet with in this world? The Lord forbid.

Shall carnal and wicked persons be so ready and willing to comply with the bloody and senseless commands of their superiors? and shall not christians be more ready and willing to comply with the commands of the great God, whose commands are all just and equal, and whose will is the perfect rule of righteousness? The chief reason of obedience is the authority of the Lord. Ah, christians! when your hearts begin to fret and fume under the smarting rod, charge one of those commands last cited upon your hearts; and if they shall mutter, charge another of those commands upon your hearts; and if, after this, they shall vex and murmur, charge another of those commands upon your hearts; and never leave charging and rubbing those commands one after another upon your hearts, till you are brought to lay your hands upon your mouths, and to sit silent before the Lord under your greatest straits and your sorest trials.

11. Consider, that mercy is nearest, deliverance and salvation is at hand, when a christian stands still, when he sits quiet and silent under his greatest troubles and his sorest

trials, Exod. 14. They were in very great straits; Pharaoh with a mighty army was behind them, the Red sea before them, mountains on each hand of them, and no visible means to deliver them; but now they stand still to see the salvation of the Lord, Exod. xiv, 13, and within a few hours their enemies are destroyed, and they are gloriously delivered, ver. 24—31. David is dumb, he sits mute under his smart afflictions, Ps. xxxix; but if you look at Ps. xl. 2, 3, you shall find mercy draws near to him, and works salvation for him: "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord." And so when Absalom had made a great conspiracy against him, and his subjects fell off from him, and he was forced to fly for his life, his spirit was quiet and calm: "And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favor in the eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and show me both it and his habitation. But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee: behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him," 2 Sam. xv. 25, 26. And the same calmness and quietness of spirit was upon him, when Shimei bitterly cursed him, and railed upon him, chap.

xvi. 5—14; and within a few days, as you may see in the two following chapters, the conspirators are destroyed, and David's throne more firmly established. Mercy is always nearest, when a man can in quietness possess his own soul; salvation is at hand, when a christian comes to lay his hand upon his mouth. Mercy will be upon the wing, loving-kindness will ride post, to put a period to that man's troubles, who sits silent in the day of his sorrows and sufferings. Ah, christians! as you would have mercy near, as you would see to the end of your afflictions, as you would have deliverance come flying upon the wings of the wind, sit mute and silent under all your troubles. As wine was then nearest, when the water-pots were filled with water, even to the brim; so when the heart is fullest of quietness, then is the wine of mercy, the wine of deliverance, nearest.

12. The last motive to work you to silence under your greatest trials, is this—Seriously consider the heinous and dangerous nature of murmuring. Now, that you may, let me propose these following particulars to your most sober consideration:

(1.) Consider, that murmuring speaks out many a root of bitterness to be strong in the soul; murmuring speaks out sin in its power, corruption upon its throne. As holy silence argues true grace, much grace, yea, grace in

its strength, and in its lively vigor; so murmuring, muttering under the hand of God, argues much sin, yea, a heart full of sin; it speaks out a heart full of self-love, Exod. xv. 24; xvi, 7, 8; and full of slavish fears, Numb. xiii. 32, 33; xiv. 1—3; and full of ignorance, John, vi. 41, 42. 71; and full of pride and unbelief, Ps. cvi. 24, 25; yea, they despised the pleasant land, or the land of desire, there is their pride; they believed not in his word, * there is their unbelief; what follows? They murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of God; they preferred Egypt before Canaan, a wilderness before a paradise. As in the first chaos there were the seeds of all creatures, so in the murmurer's heart there are not only the seeds of all sin, but a lively operation of all sin. Sin is become mighty in the hearts of murmurers, and none but an almighty God can root it out; those roots of bitterness have so spread and strengthened themselves in the hearts of murmurers; Isa. xxvi. 4, that everlasting strength must be put forth, or they will be undone forever. But,

(2.) Consider, that the Holy Ghost hath set a brand of infamy upon murmurers, he hath stigmatized them for ungodly persons, Jude 15, 16. "To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them, of

* Ps. lxviii, 19, 20. Unbelief is virtually all ill.

all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." But who are these ungodly sinners? They "are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts," &c. When Christ comes to execute judgment upon ungodly ones, murmurers shall be set in the front; they shall experience the first of his wrath, and the fierceness of his wrath, and the greatness of his wrath. The front, you know, is first assaulted, and most strongly assaulted; Christ will bend all his power and strength against murmurers; his little finger shall be heavier upon them than his loins shall be upon others. 1 Kings xii. 11. 14; other sinners shall be chastised with whips, but ungodly murmurers shall be chastised with scorpions. If you can joy in that black character of ungodly sinners, be murmurers still; if not, cease from murmuring. Where murmuring is in its reign, in its dominion, there you may speak and write that person ungodly. Let murmurers make what profession they will of godliness, yet if murmuring keeps the throne in their hearts, Christ will deal with them at last as ungodly sinners. A man may be denominated ungodly, as well from his murmuring, if he lives under the dominion of it, as from his drunkenness, swearing, whoring, lying, stealing, &c. A murmurer is an ungodly man; no man on earth more unlike to God than the

murmurer; and therefore no wonder if, when Christ comes to execute judgment, he deals so severely and terribly with him. In the wars of Tamerlane, one having found a great pot of gold that was hid in the earth, he brought it to Tamerlane, who asked, Whether it had his father's stamp upon it? but when he saw it had not his father's stamp, but the Roman stamp upon it, he would not own it, but cast it away. The Lord Jesus, when he shall come with all his saints to execute judgment, oh! he will not own murmurers; nay, he will cast them away forever, because they have not his father's stamp upon them. Ah, souls! souls! as you would not go up and down this world with a badge of ungodliness upon you, take heed of murmuring.

(3.) Consider, that murmuring is a mother sin; it is the mother of harlots, the mother of all abominations, a sin that breeds many other sins, namely, disobedience, contempt, ingratitude, impatience, distrust, rebellion, cursing, carnality; yea, it charges God with folly, Numb. xvi. 41; xvii. 10. The language of a murmuring, a muttering soul, is this, Surely God might have done this sooner, and that wiser, and the other thing better, &c. Murmuring is a sin that breeds and brings forth many sins at once. It is like the monster Hydra; cut off one head, and many will rise up in its room. Oh! therefore, bend all thy

strength against this mother sin. As the king of Syria said to his captains, "Fight neither with small nor great, but with the king of Israel," 1 Kings xxii. 31; so say I, Fight not so much against this sin or that, but fight against your murmuring, which is a mother sin; make use of all your christian armor, make use of all the ammunition of heaven, Eph. vi. 10, 11, to destroy the mother; and in destroying her, you will destroy the daughters. When Goliath was slain, the Philistines fled; when a general in an army is cut off, the common soldiers are easily and quickly routed and destroyed; so destroy but murmuring, and you will quickly destroy disobedience, ingratitude, impatience, distrust, &c. Oh! kill this mother sin, that this may never kill thy soul.

(4.) Consider, that murmuring is a God-provoking sin; it is a sin that provokes God, Numb. xxvi. 65; xii. 9, 10; Rev. xvi. 9—11, not only to afflict, but also to destroy a people. "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against me? I have heard the murmuring of the children of Israel, which they murmur against me. Say unto them, As truly as I live, saith the Lord, as ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured

against me," Numb. xiv. 27—29. "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer," 1 Cor. x. 10. All our murmurings do but provoke the Lord to strike us, and destroy us.

All our murmurings are as so many arrows shot at God himself, and they will return upon our own hearts; they reach not him, but they will hit us; they hurt not him, but they will wound us; therefore it is better to be mute than to murmur; it is dangerous to provoke a consuming fire, Heb. xii. 29.

(5.) Consider, that murmuring is the devil's image, sin, and punishment. Satan is still murmuring; he murmurs at every mercy that God bestows, at every grace he gives, he murmurs at every sin he pardons, and every soul he saves. A soul cannot have a good look, nor hear a good word from heaven, but Satan murmurs at it; he murmurs and mutters at every act of pitying grace, of preventing grace, of supporting grace, of strengthening grace, and of comforting grace, that God exercises towards poor souls; he murmurs at every sip, at every drop, at every crumb of mercy that God bestows. Murmuring, and envy at man's innocency and felicity, put him upon attempting to plunge man into the bottomless gulf of sin and misery; he knowing himself to be damned, and lost forever, would needs try all ways how to make happy man eternally unhappy. This

old serpent was, by sad experience, found to have too much power in the heart of Adam whilst yet in the height of all his glory and excellency. Murmuring is the first-born of the devil, and nothing renders a man more like to him than murmuring. And as murmuring is Satan's sin, so it is his punishment. God hath given him up to a murmuring spirit; nothing pleases him, all things go against him; he is perpetually muttering and murmuring at persons or things. Now, oh what a dreadful thing it is to bear Satan's image upon us, and to be given up to the devil's punishment! It were better not to be, than thus to be given up; and therefore cease from murmuring, and sit mute under your sorest trials. But,

(6.) Consider, that murmuring is a mercy-imbittering sin, a mercy-souring sin. As to put the sweetest things into a sour vessel, sours them, or, into a bitter vessel, imbitters them; so murmuring puts gall and wormwood into every cup of mercy that God gives into our hands. As holy silence gives a sweet taste, a delightful relish, to all a man's mercies, so murmuring imbitters all; the murmurer can taste no sweetness in his sweetest morsels; every mercy, every morsel, tastes like the white of an egg to him, Job vi. 6. A murmurer can taste no sweet, he can feel no comfort, he can take no delight in any mercy he enjoys. The murmurer writes Marah, that is, Bitter-

ness, upon all his mercies, and he reads and tastes bitterness in them all. All the murmurer's grapes are grapes of gall, and all their clusters are bitter, Deut. xxxii. 32. As, to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet, so to the murmuring soul every sweet thing is bitter. The mute christian can suck sweetness from every mercy, but the murmurer cries out, Oh, it is bitter! Oh, it is dry!

(7.) Consider, that murmuring is a mercy-destroying sin, a mercy-murdering sin; murmuring cuts the throat of mercy, it stabs all our mercies at the heart. "Doubtless, ye shall not come into the land concerning which I sware to make you dwell therein, save Caleb the son of Jephunneh, and Joshua the son of Nun," Numb. xiv. 30. God promises them that they should possess the holy land, upon condition of their obedience; this condition they brake, and therefore God was not forsworn, though he cut them off in the wilderness, and kept them out of Canaan, Ps. lxxxix. 30—32; Deut. xxxi. 16, 17. But what is the sin that provokes the Lord to bar them out of the land of promise, and to cut them off from all those mercies that they enjoyed, which entered into the holy land? Why, it was their murmuring.—As you love your mercies, as you would have the sweet of your mercies, and as you would enjoy the life of your mercies, take heed of murmuring.

Murmuring will bring a consumption upon your mercies; it is a worm that will make all your mercies to wither. As there are some that love their mercies into the grave, and others that plot their mercies into the grave, so there are some that murmur their mercies into the grave. As you would have your mercies always fresh and green, smiling, and thriving; as you would have your mercies to bed and board with you, to rise up and lie down with you, and in all conditions to attend you; murmur not, murmur not. The mute christian's mercies are most sweet, and most long-lived; the murmurer's mercies, like Jonah's gourd, will quickly wither. Murmuring hath cut the throat of national mercies, of domestic mercies, and of personal mercies; and, therefore, oh! how should men fly from it as from a serpent! as from the avenger of blood! yea, as from hell itself!

(8.) Consider, that murmuring unfits the soul for duty. A murmurer can neither hear, nor pray, nor read, nor meditate to profit; the murmurer is neither fit to do good nor receive good; murmuring unfits the soul for performing duties, for delighting in duties, and for communion with God in duties. Murmuring fills the soul with cares, fears, distractions, and vexations; all which unfits a man for duty. As a holy quietness and calmness of spirit prompts a man to duty, Prov. iii. 17, as it makes every

duty easy and pleasant to the soul; so murmuring unhinges the soul, indisposes the soul, and takes off its chariot-wheels, Ps. xl. 12, so that the soul cannot look up to God, nor do for him, nor receive from him, nor wait on him, nor walk with him, nor act faith upon him, 2 Kings, vi. 33. Oh! therefore, as ever you would be in a blessed preparedness, and a blessed fitness for duty, take heed of murmuring, and sit mute and silent under the afflicting hand of God, Isa. xxvi. 9—11.

(9.) Consider, that murmuring unmans a man, Isa. v. 18—20, it strips him of his reason, and understanding; it makes him call evil good, and good evil; it puts light for darkness, and darkness for light; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; it calls saviors destroyers, and deliverers murderers; as you see in the murmuring Israelites, Exod. xiv. xv. xvi. Murmuring uncrowns a man; the murmurer may say, "The crown is fallen from my head," Lam. v. 16. Murmuring strips a man of all his glory, it spoils all his excellency, it destroys the nobility of man, it speaks him out to be a base, ignoble creature. Murmuring clouds a man's understanding, it perverts his judgment, it puts out the eye of reason, it stupifies his conscience, it sours the heart, disorders the will, and distempers the affections; it brutifies a man, yea, it sets him below the beasts that perish; for a man had better be a

beast, than be like a beast. The murmurer is the hieroglyphic of folly; he is a comprehensive vanity; he is sottish and senseless; he neither understands God nor himself, nor any thing as he should, Isa. iii. 8. He is the man that must be sent to school, to learn of the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, and the creeping things of the earth, Matt. vi., Prov. vi., how to cease from murmuring, and how to be mute. Ah, sirs! as you would have the name, the honor, and the reputation of being men, take heed of murmuring, and sit silent before the Lord.

(10.) Murmuring is a time-destroying sin. Ah, the precious time that is buried in the grave of murmuring! When the murmurer should be praying, he is murmuring against the Lord; when he should be hearing, he is murmuring against Divine providences; when he should be reading, he is murmuring against instruments. The murmurer spends much precious time in musing how to get out of such a trouble, how to cast off such a yoke, how to be rid of such a burden, how to revenge himself for such a wrong, how to supplant such a person, how to reproach those that are above him, and how to affront those that are below him; and a thousand other ways murmurers have to expend that precious time that some would redeem with a world: as queen Elizabeth on her death-bed cried out, Time, time,

a world of wealth for an inch of time! The murmurer lavishly and profusely trifles away that precious time that it is his greatest interest in this world to redeem, Eph. v. 16; Rev. ii. 21. Every day, every hour in the day, is a talent of time, and God expects the improvement of it, 1 Pet. iv. 2. 5, and will charge the non-improvement of it upon you at last. Ah, murmurers! murmurers! you who by your murmuring trifle away so many golden hours and seasons of mercy, have you no God to honor, have you no Christ to believe in, have you no hearts to change, no sins to be pardoned, no souls to save, no hell to escape, no heaven to seek after? Oh, if you have, why do you spend so much of your precious time in murmuring against God, against men, against this or that thing? Eternity rides upon the back of time; this is the moment; if it be well improved, you are made forever; if not, you are undone forever.

I have read of Archias, a Lacedemonian, that whilst he was rioting and quaffing, in the midst of his cups, one delivers him a letter purposely, to signify that there were some that lay in wait to take away his life, and withal desires him to read it presently, because it was a serious business, and matter of high concernment to him. Oh! said he, I will think of serious things to-morrow; but that night he was slain. Ah, murmurer! cease from mur-

muring to-day, or else thou mayst be forever undone by murmuring to-morrow. The old saying was, Now or never; so say I, now or never give over murmuring, and let it swallow up no more of your precious time. What would not many a murmurer give for one of those days, yea, for one of those hours, which he hath trifled away in murmuring, when it is a day too late! Ah, murmurers! you will gain more by one day's faithful serving of God, than ever you have gained by murmuring against God. But,

(11.) Consider this, christians, that of all men in the world you have least cause, yea, no cause to be murmuring and muttering under any dispensations that you meet with in this world. Is not God thy portion? Lam. iii. 24; Eph. iii. 8; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4. Chrysostom propounds this question, "Was Job miserable when he had lost all that God had given him? and gives this answer: No; he had still that God who gave him all." Is not Christ thy treasure? is not heaven thine inheritance? and wilt thou murmur? Hast thou not much in hand, and more in hope? hast thou not much in possession, but much more in reversion? and wilt thou murmur? Hath not God given thee a changed heart, a renewed nature, and a sanctified soul? and wilt thou murmur? Hath not God given thee himself to satisfy thee? his Son to save thee? his Spirit to lead thee?

his grace to adorn thee? his covenant to assure thee? his mercy to pardon thee? his righteousness to clothe thee? and wilt thou murmur? Hath he not made thee a friend, a son, a brother, a bride, an heir? and wilt thou murmur? Hath not God often turned thy water into wine, thy brass into silver, and thy silver into gold? and wilt thou murmur? When thou wast dead, did not he quicken thee? and when thou wast lost, did not he seek thee? and when thou wast wounded, did not he heal thee? and when thou wert falling, did not he support thee? and when thou wert down, did not he raise thee? and when thou wert staggering, did not he establish thee? and when thou wert erring, did not he reduce thee? and when thou wert tempted, did not he succor thee? and when thou wert in dangers, did not he deliver thee? and wilt thou murmur? What! thou that art so highly advanced and exalted above many thousands in the world? Murmuring is a black garment, and it becomes none so ill as saints.

Lastly, Consider, that murmuring makes the life of man miserable. Every murmurer is his own executioner. Murmuring vexes the heart; it wears and tears, enrages and inflames, wounds and stabs the heart. Every murmurer is a murderer; he kills many at once, namely, his joy, his comfort, his peace, his rest, his soul. No man is so inwardly miserable as the

murmurer; no man hath such inward gripes and griefs, such inward bitterness and heaviness, such inward contentions and combustions as he. Every murmurer is his own tormentor; murmuring is a fire within, that will burn up all; it is an earthquake within, that will overturn all; it is a disease within, that will infect all; it is a poison within, that will prey upon all. And thus I have done with those motives that may persuade us not to murmur or mutter, but to be mute and silent under the greatest afflictions, the saddest providences, and sharpest trials that we meet with in this life.

I shall now address myself to answer those objections, and to remove those impediments, which hinder poor souls from being silent and mute under the afflicting hand of God, &c.

Object. 1. "Sir, did I but know that I were afflicted in love, I would hold my peace under my affliction, I would sit mute before the Lord. But oh! how shall I come to understand that those strokes are the strokes of love, that those wounds are the wounds of a friend?" I answer,

1. If thy heart be drawn more out to the Lord by the affliction, then the affliction is in love; if it be so sanctified, as that it draws out thy soul to love the Lord more, Ps. xviii.

1—8; cxvi. 1—5; cxix. 67, 71; Isa. xxxviii., and to fear the Lord more, and to please the Lord more, and to cleave to the Lord more, and to wait on the Lord more, and to walk with the Lord more, then thy affliction is sent in love. Oh! then they are the wounds of a friend indeed. If the afflictions that are upon us do increase our courage, strengthen our patience, raise our faith, inflame our love, and enliven our hopes, certainly they are in love, and all wounds are the wounds of a friend. But,

2. If you are more careful and studious how to glorify God in the affliction, Dan. iii. vi., and how to be kept from sinning under the affliction, than how to get out of the affliction; then certainly your affliction is in love. Where God smites in love, there the soul makes it his work how to glorify God, and how to lift up God, and how to be a name and an honor to God. The daily language of such a soul under the rod is this, Lord, stand by me that I sin not, uphold me that I sin not, strengthen me that I sin not, Joshua vii. 7. He that will not sin to repair and make up his losses, though he knew assuredly that the committing of such a sin would make up all again, he may conclude that his affliction is in love.

He that will not break the hedge of a fair command, to avoid the foul way of some heavy affliction, may well conclude, that his affliction

is in love. Christians! what say you? do you thus bespeak the Lord? Lord, take care of thy glory, and let me rather sink in my affliction, than sin under my affliction! If this be the bent and frame of thy heart, it is certain the affliction that is upon thee is in love. The primitive times afforded many such brave spirits, though this age affords but few.

3. If you enjoy the special presence of God with your spirits in your affliction, then your affliction is in love, Ps. xxiii. 4—6. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee,"* Isa. xliii. 2. Hast thou a special presence of God with thy spirit, strengthening that, quieting that, satisfying that, cheering and comforting that? "In the multitude of my thoughts, that is, of my troubled, intertwined, and perplexed thoughts, (as the branches of a tree by some strong wind are twisted one within another, as the Hebrew word properly signifies,) "thy comforts delight my soul," Ps. xciv. 19. Here is a presence of God with his soul; here are comforts and delights that reach the soul; here

* The bush, which was a type of the church, consumed not all the while it burned with fire, because God was in the midst of it.

is a cordial to strengthen his spirit. When Paul would wish his dear son Timothy the best mercy, the greatest, and the most comprehensive mercy in all the world, a mercy that carries the virtue, value, and sweetness of all mercies in it, he wishes the presence of God with his spirit, "The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit," 2 Tim. iv. 22. In point of honor, of profit and pleasure, of safety and security, and of comfort and joy, it is the greatest blessing and happiness in this world, to have the presence of God with our spirits, especially in times of trials: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 16. By the outward man you are to understand, not merely our bodies, but our persons, estates, and outward condition in this world; and by the inward man you are to understand, our souls, our persons, considered according to our spiritual estate. Now, when the inward man gains new strength by every new trouble, when as troubles, pressures, afflictions, and tribulations are increased, a christian's inward strength is increased also, then his afflictions are in love; when the presence of God is with our inward man, cheering, comforting, encouraging, strengthening, and renewing that, we may safely conclude, that all these trials, though they are ever so sharp and smart, yet they are in love.

I have read of a company of poor christians that were banished into some remote parts; and one standing by seeing them pass along, said, That it was a very sad condition those poor people were in, to be thus hurried from the society of men, and to be made companions with the beasts of the field. True, said another, it were a sad condition indeed, if they were carried to a place where they should not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, God goes along with them, and will exhibit the comforts of his presence whithersoever they go. The presence of God with the spirits of his people is a breast of comfort that can never be drawn dry; it is an everlasting spring that will never fail. Well, christian, thou art under many great troubles, Heb. xiii. 5, 6, many sore trials, Isa. xl. 29—31; but tell me, doth not God give into thy soul such cordials, such supports, comforts and refreshments, that the world knows not of? Oh then certainly thy affliction is in love.

4. If by your afflictions you are made more conformable to Christ in his virtues, then certainly your afflictions are in love. Many are conformable to Christ in their sufferings, that are not made conformable to Christ in his virtues by their sufferings. Many are in poverty, neglect, shame, contempt, reproach, &c. like to Christ, who yet by these are not made more like to Christ in his meekness, humbleness,

heavenliness, holiness, righteousness, faithfulness, fruitfulness, goodness, contentedness, patience, submission, and subjection. Oh, but if in these things you are made more like to Christ, without all peradventure your afflictions are in love. If by afflictions the soul be led to show forth the virtues of Christ, as in 1 Pet. ii. 9, then certainly those afflictions are in love; for they never have such an operation, but where they are set on by the hand of love. When God strikes as an enemy, all those strokes do but make a man more an enemy to God, as you see in Pharaoh, and others; but when the strokes of God are the strokes of love, they do but bring the soul nearer to Christ, and transform the soul more and more into the likeness of Christ. If by thy afflictions thou art made more holy, humble, heavenly, &c. they are in love. But,

5. If by outward afflictions thy soul be brought more under the inward teachings of God, Job xxxiv. 31, 32, doubtless thy afflictions are in love: "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law," Ps. xciv. 12. All the chastening in the world, without Divine teaching, will never make a man blessed. That man that finds correction attended with instruction, and lashing with lessoning, is a happy man. If God, by the affliction that is upon thee, shall teach thee how to loathe sin more, how to

trample upon the world more, and how to walk with God more, thy afflictions are in love; if God shall teach thee, by afflictions, how to die to sin more, to thy relations more, and to self-interest more, thy afflictions are in love; if God shall teach thee by afflictions, how to live to Christ more, to lift up Christ more, and to long for Christ more, thy afflictions are in love; if God shall teach thee, by afflictions, to get assurance of a better life, and to be still in a gracious readiness and preparedness for the day of thy death, thy afflictions are in love; if God shall teach thee by afflictions, how to mind heaven more, to live in heaven more, and to be more fit for heaven, thy afflictions are in love; if God, by afflictions, shall teach thy proud heart to lie more low, thy hard heart to grow more humble, thy censorious heart more charitable, thy carnal heart more spiritual, and thy froward heart more quiet, &c. thy afflictions are in love. When God teaches thy reins as well as thy brains, thy heart as well as thy head, any of these lessons, thy afflictions are in love. Where God loves, he afflicts in love: and wherever God afflicts in love, there he will, first or last, teach such souls such lessons as shall do them good to all eternity.

6. If God suit your burden to your back, your trial to your strength, according to that golden promise, 1. Cor. x. 13, your afflictions are in love. "There hath no temptation taken

you, but such as lie common to man; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." When God's strokes, and a christian's strength, are suited one to another, all is in love; let the load be ever so heavy that God lays on, if he put underneath his everlasting arms, all is love. As Egypt had many venomous creatures, so it had many antidotes against them; when God shall lay antidotes into the soul against all the afflictions that befall a christian, then they are all in love. It is no matter how heavy the burden is, if God gives a shoulder to bear it, all is in love. It is no matter how bitter the cup is, if God gives courage to drink it off. It is no matter how hot the furnace is, if God gives power to walk in the midst of it, all is in love.

7. If thou art willing to lie in the furnace till thy dross be consumed; if thou art willing that the plaster should lie on, though it smart, till the cure be wrought; if thou art willing that the physic should work, though it make thee sick, till the humors be expelled, all is in love. Cain, Saul, and Pharaoh, were all for removing the stroke of affliction; they cry not, Our sins are greater than we are able to bear; but they cry out, Our punishment is greater than we are able to bear. They cry not, Lord, take away our sins, but, Lord, remove

the stroke of thy hand. Oh! but when affliction comes in love upon a soul, the language of that soul is this, Lord, remove the cause, rather than the punishment; my corruption, rather than my affliction. Lord, what will it avail me to have the sore skinned over, if the corrupt matter still remain in? There is no evil, Lord, like the evil of sin; and therefore, deliver me rather from the evil of sin, than the evil of sufferings. I know, Lord, that affliction cannot be so displeasing to me, as sin is dishonorable and displeasing to thee; and, therefore, Lord, let me see the end of my sin, though in this world I should never see an end of my sorrows; oh! let me see an end of my corruptions, though I should never see an end of my corrections. Lord, I had rather have a cure for my heart, than a cure for my head; I had rather be made whole and sound within, than without; I had rather have a healthy soul than a healthy body; a pure inside, than a beautiful outside. If this be the settled frame and temper of thy spirit, certainly thy afflictions are in love.

There was one who, being under marvellous great pains and torments in his body, (occasioned by many sore diseases that were upon him,) cried out, Had I all the world I would give it for ease; and yet, for all the world, I would not have ease till the cure be wrought. Sure his afflictions were in love. The first

request, the great request and the last request of a soul afflicted in love, is, A cure Lord, a cure, Lord, a cure, Lord, of this wretched heart and this sinful life, and all will be well, all will be well.

Lastly, If you live a life of faith in your afflictions, then your afflictions are in love. Now, what is it to live by faith in affliction, but to live in the exercising of faith upon those precious promises that are made to an afflicted condition? These following promises have been choice cordials to many christians under sore distresses. God hath promised to be with his people in their afflictions, Isa. xliii. 2, 3. He hath promised to support them under their afflictions, Isa. xli. 10, and lvii. 15; John x. 27—29; Isa. xxvi. 3; Matt. xi. 28. He hath promised to deliver his people out of their afflictions, Ps. l. 15. He hath promised to purge away his people's sins by afflictions, Isa. i. 25. He hath promised to make his people more partakers of his holiness by affliction, Heb. xii. 10. He hath promised to make afflictions an inlet to a more full and sweet enjoyment of himself, Hos. ii. 14. He hath promised that he will never leave nor forsake his people in their afflictions, Heb. xiii. 5, 6. He hath promised that all their afflictions shall work for their good, Rom. viii. 28. Now, if thy faith be drawn forth to feed upon these promises; if these be heavenly

manna to thy faith, and thy soul lives upon them, and sucks strength and sweetness from them, under all the trials and troubles that are upon thee, thy afflictions are in love.

A bee can suck honey out of a flower, which a fly cannot; if thy faith can extract comfort and sweetness, in thy saddest distresses, out of the breasts of precious promises, and gather one contrary out of another, honey out of the rocks, thy afflictions are in love. They are the food of faith and the very soul of faith. They are an everlasting spring that can never be drawn dry; they are an inexhaustible treasure that can never be exhausted; they are the garden of paradise, and full of such choice flowers that will never fade, but be always fresh, sweet, green, and flourishing; and if, in the day of affliction, they prove thus to thy soul, thy afflictions are in love. If, in all thy troubles, thy heart be drawn forth to act faith upon the promises, thy troubles are from love. And this much by way of answer to the first objection.

Object. 2. "Oh! but, sir, the Lord hath smitten me in my nearest and dearest comforts and contentments, and how, then, can I hold my peace? God hath taken away a husband, a wife, a child, an only child, a bosom-friend, and how then, can I be silent?" &c.

Ans. To this I answer, 1. If God did not strike thee in that mercy which was near and

dear unto thee, it would not amount to an affliction. That is not worthy the name of an affliction, that doth not strike at some bosom-mercy; that trouble is no trouble, that doth not touch some choice contentment; that storm is no storm, that only blows off the leaves, but never hurts the fruit; that thrust is no thrust, that only touches the clothes, but never reaches the skin; that cut is no cut, that only cuts the hat, but never touches the head; neither is that affliction any affliction, that only reaches some remote enjoyment, but never reaches a Joseph, a Benjamin, &c.

2. The best mercy is not too good for the best God; the best of the best is not good enough for him who is goodness itself; the best child, the best yoke-fellow, the best friend, the best jewel in all thy crown, must be readily assigned to thy best God; there is no mercy, no enjoyment, no contentment, worthy of God, but the best; the milk of mercy is for others, the cream of mercy is due to God; the choicest, the fairest, and the sweetest flowers are fittest for the bosom of God; if he will take the best flower in all thy garden, and plant it in a better soil, hast thou any cause to murmur? wilt thou not hold thy peace?

3. Your near and dear mercies were first the Lord's before they were yours, and always the Lord's more than they were yours. When God gives a mercy, he doth not relinquish his

own right in that mercy. "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee," 1 Chron. xxix. 14. The sweet of mercy is yours, but the sovereign right to dispose of your mercies is the Lord's. Whatsoever thou art, thou owest to him that made thee; and whatsoever thou hast, thou owest to him that redeemed thee. You say, it is but just and reasonable that men should do with their own as they please; and, is it not just and reasonable that God, who is Lord paramount, should do with his own as he pleases? Dost thou believe that the great God may do in heaven what he pleases, and on the seas what he pleases, and in the nations and kingdoms of the world what he pleases, and in thy heart what he pleases? and dost thou not believe that God may do in thy house what he pleases, and do with thy mercies what he pleases? "Behold, he taketh away," or he snatcheth away, (it may be a husband, a wife, a child, an estate,) "who can hinder him? who will say unto him, What doest thou?" Job ix. 12. Job plainly alludes to God's taking away his children, servants, and cattle. Who dares cavil against God? who dares question that God that is unquestionable, that chief Lord that is uncontrollable, and who may do with his own what he pleaseth? "And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and

none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" Dan. iv. 35. Where is the prince, the peasant, the master, the servant, the husband, the wife, the father, the child, that dares say to God, What doest thou? In matters of arithmetical accounts, set one against ten, ten against a hundred, a hundred against a thousand, a thousand against ten thousand, although there be great odds, yet there is some comparison; but if a man could set down an infinite number, then there could be no comparison at all, because the one is finite, the other infinite; so, set all the princes and powers of the earth in opposition to God, they shall never be able to withstand him. He can raise all the world in arms, to own him, to contend for him, or to revenge any affronts that by any are put upon him; and, therefore, who shall say unto him, what doest thou? Water is stronger than earth, fire stronger than water, angels stronger than men, and God stronger than them all; and, therefore, who shall say unto God, What doest thou? when he takes their nearest and their dearest mercies from them. But,

4. It may be thou hast not made a happy improvement of thy near and dear mercies, whilst thou enjoyedst them; thou hast been taken with thy mercies, but thy heart hath not been taken up in the improvement of them; there are many who are very much taken with

their mercies, who make no conscience of improving their mercies. Have thy near and dear mercies been a star to lead thee to Christ? have they been a cloud by day, and a pillar of light by night, to lead thee towards the heavenly Canaan? have they been a Jacob's ladder to thy soul? hast thou by them been provoked to give up thyself to God as a living sacrifice? Rom. xii. 1; hast thou improved thy near and dear mercies to the inflaming of thy love to God; to the strengthening of thy confidence in God; to the raising thy communion with God; and to the engaging thy heart to a more close and circumspect walking before God? &c. If thou hast not thus improved them, thou hast more cause to be mute than to murmur; to be silent, than to be impatient; to fall out with thyself, than to fall out with thy God. Children and fools are taken with many things, but improve nothing; such children and fools are most men; they are much taken with their mercies, but they make no improvement of their mercies, and therefore no wonder if God strip them of their mercies. The candle of mercy is set up, not to play by, but to work by.

Pliny speaks of one Cressinus, who improved a little piece of ground to a far greater advantage than his neighbors could a greater quantity of land; thereupon he was accused of witchcraft; but he to defend himself, brought into the court his servants and their working-

tools, and said, These are my witchcrafts, O ye Romans! these servants, and these working-tools, are all the witchcraft that I know of. When the people heard this plea, with one consent they acquitted him, and declared him not guilty; and so his little piece of ground was secured to him. There is no way to secure your mercies, but by improving them; there is nothing that provokes God to strip you of your mercies, like the non-improvement of them. "Take, therefore, the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath ten talents," Matt. xxv. 24—30. By some stroke or other God will take away the mercy that is not improved. If thy slothfulness hath put God upon passing a sentence of death upon thy dearest mercy, thank thyself, and hold thy peace.

5. If in this case God had made thee a precedent to others, thou must have held thy peace; how much more then shouldest thou be mute when God hath made many others precedents to thee? Did not God smite Aaron in his near and dear enjoyments; and did not he hold his peace? Lev. x. 1—3. Did not God smite David in his Absalom, and Job in his sons, daughters, estate, and body, and Jonah in his gourd? Art thou more beloved than these? No. Hast thou more grace than these? No. Hast thou done more for Divine glory than these? No. Art thou richer in spir-

itual experience than these? No. Hast thou attained to higher enjoyments than these? No. Hast thou been more serviceable in thy generation than these? No. Hast thou been more exemplary in thy life and conversation than these? No. &c. Then why shouldst thou murmur and fret at that which hath been the common lot of the dearest saints?

Though God hath smitten thee in this or that near and dear enjoyment, it is thy wisdom to hold thy peace; for that God who hath taken away one, might have taken away all. Justice writes a sentence of death upon all Job's mercies at once, and yet he holds his peace; and wilt not thou hold thine, though God hath cropt the fairest flower in all thy garden? When our hearts begin to storm and take on, when God smites us in this near mercy, and in that dear enjoyment; oh! let us lay the law of silence upon our hearts, let us charge our souls to be quiet; for that God who hath taken away one child, might have taken away every child; and he who hath taken away one friend, might have taken away every friend; and he who hath taken away a part of thy estate, might have taken away thy whole estate: therefore hold thy peace; let who will murmur, yet be thou mute.

6. It may be thy sins have been much about thy near and dear enjoyments; it may be thou hast over-loved them, and over-prized them,

and overmuch delighted thyself in them; it may be they have often had thy heart, when they should have had but thy hand; it may be that care, that fear, that confidence, that joy, which should have been expended upon them. Ah! how often hath one creature comfort, and sometimes another, come in between Christ and your souls! How often have your dear enjoyments stood in Christ's place! Now, if a husband, a child, a friend, shall take up that room in thy soul that is proper and peculiar to God, God will either imbitter it, remove it, or be the death of it. If once the love of a wife runs out more to a servant, than to her husband, the master will turn him out of doors, though otherwise he were a servant worth gold. The sweetest comforts of this life are but like treasures of snow: do but take a handful of snow, and crush it in your hands, and it will melt away presently; but if you let it lie upon the ground, it will continue for some time; and so it is with the comforts of this world; if you grasp them in your hands, and lay them too near your hearts, they will quickly melt and vanish away; but if you will not hold them too fast in your hands, nor lay them too close to your hearts, they will abide the longer with you. There are those that hug their mercies to death, that kiss them till they kill them. Many a man hath slain his mercies, by setting too great a value upon them; over-loved mercies

are seldom long-lived. "When I take from them the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters," Ezek. xxiv. 25. The way to lose your mercies, is to indulge them; the way to destroy them, is to fix your minds and hearts upon them; thou mayst write bitterness and death upon that mercy first, that hath first taken away thy heart from God. Now, if God hath stript thee of that very mercy with which thou hast often committed spiritual adultery and idolatry, hast thou any cause to murmur? hast thou not rather cause to hold thy peace, and to be mute before the Lord? Christians, your hearts are Christ's royal throne, and in this throne Christ will be chief, (as Pharaoh said to Joseph, Gen. xli. 40,) he will endure no competitor. If you shall attempt to enthrone the creature, be it ever so near and dear unto you, Christ will dethrone it, he will destroy it; he will quickly lay them in a bed of dust, who shall aspire to his royal throne. But,

7. Thou hast no cause to murmur, because of the loss of such near and dear enjoyments, considering those more noble and spiritual mercies and favors that thou still enjoyest. Grant that Joseph is not, Gen. xlii. 36, and Benjamin is not; yet Jesus is; he is yesterday, and to-day, and the same forever, Heb. xiii. 8. Thy union and communion with Christ re-

mains still, the immortal seed abides in thee still, the Sun of Righteousness shines upon thee still, thou art in favor with God still, and thou art under the anointings of the Spirit still, and under the influences of heaven still, &c.; why then shouldst thou mutter, and not rather hold thy peace? Ah, christians! hath God blessed you with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, Eph. i. 3; hath the Lord given you himself for a portion; hath he given you his Son for your Redemption, and his Spirit for your instruction; and will you murmur? Hath he given his grace to adorn you, his promises to comfort you, his ordinances to improve you, and the hopes of heaven to encourage you; and will you mutter? Paulinus Nolanus, when his city was taken from him, prayed thus: Lord, (said he,) let me not be troubled at the loss of my gold, silver, honor, &c. for thou art all, and much more than all these unto me. In the want of all your sweetest enjoyments, Christ will be all in all unto you, Col. iii. 11. My jewels are my husband, said Phocion's wife; my ornaments are my two sons, said the mother of the Gracchi; my treasures are my friends, said Constantius; and so may a Christian, under his greatest losses, say, Christ is my richest jewels, my chief treasures, my best ornaments, my sweetest delights; what all these things are to a

carnal heart, a worldly heart, that (and more) is Christ to me.

8. If God, by smiting thee in thy nearest and dearest enjoyments, shall put thee upon a more thorough smiting and mortifying of thy dearest sins, thou hast no cause to murmur. There is some Delilah, some darling, some beloved sin or other, Ps. xviii. 23; Heb. xii. 1, that a christian's calling, condition, constitution, or temptations, lead him to play withal, and to hug in his own bosom, rather than some other. As in a ground that lieth untilled, amongst the great variety of weeds, there is usually some master-weed that is rifer and ranker than all the rest; and as it is in the body of man, that although, in some degree or other, more or less, there be a mixture of all the four elements, not any of them wholly wanting, yet there is some of them predominant, that gives the denomination; in which regard, some are said to be of a sanguine, some of a phlegmatic, some of a choleric, and some of a melancholy constitution; so it is also in the souls of men, though there be a general mixture and medley of all evil and corrupt qualities, yet there is some one usually that is paramount, which, like the prince of devils, is most powerful and prevalent, that swayeth and showeth forth itself more eminently and evidently than any other of them do. And as in every man's body there is a seed and principle of death,

yet in some there is a proneness to one kind of disease more than another, that may hasten death; so, though the root of sin and bitterness hath spread itself over all, yet every man hath his inclination to one kind of sin rather than another, and this may be called a man's proper sin, his bosom sin, his darling sin. Now, it is one of the hardest works in this world, to subdue and bring under this bosom sin. Oh! the prayers, the tears, the sighs, the sobs, the groans, that it will cost a christian, before he brings under this darling sin! Look upon a rabbit's skin, how well it comes off till it comes to the head, but then what hauling and pulling is there before it stirs! So it is in the mortifying, in the crucifying of sin. A man may easily prove and mortify pride and such and such sins, but when it comes to the head sin, to the master sin, oh, what tugging and pulling is there, what striving and struggling is there, to get off that sin!

Now, if the Lord, by smiting thee in some near and dear enjoyment, shall draw out thy heart to oppose thy master sin, and shall so sanctify the affliction as to make it issue in the mortification of thy bosom corruption; what eminent cause wilt thou have rather to bless him, than to sit down and murmur against him! And, doubtless, if thou art dear to God, God will, by striking thy dearest mercy, put thee upon striking at thy darling sin; and therefore

hold thy peace, even then when God touches the apple of thine eye.

9. Consider, that the Lord hath many ways to make up the loss of a near and dear mercy to thee, Matt. xix. 27—30. He can make up thy loss in something else that may be better for thee, and he will certainly make up thy loss, either in kind or in worth. He took from David an Absalom, and he gave him a Solomon; he took from him a Michal, and gave him a wise Abigail; he took from Job a fair estate, and afterwards doubled it to him; he removed the bodily presence of Christ from his disciples, but gave them more abundantly of his spiritual presence, John xvi. 7, 8, &c. Acts ii., which was by far the greater and the sweeter mercy. If Moses be taken away, Joshua shall be raised in his room; If David be gathered to his fathers, a Solomon shall succeed him in his throne; if John be cast into prison, a greater than John, even Christ himself, will preach. He that lives upon God in the loss of creature comforts, shall find all made up in the God of comforts; he shall be able to say, Though my child is not, my friend is not, my yoke-fellow is not, yet my God liveth, and blessed be my rock, Ps. xviii. 46. Though this mercy is not, and that mercy is not, yet covenant mercies, the sure mercies of David, continue, 2 Sam. xxiii. 5; these bed and board with me, these will go to the grave,

and to glory with me. I have read of a godly man who, living near a philosopher, did often persuade him to become a christian; Oh! but, said the philosopher, I must, or may lose all for Christ; to which the good man replied, If you lose any thing for Christ, he will be sure to repay it a hundred-fold. Ay, but, said the philosopher, will you be bound for Christ, that if he doth not pay me, you will? Yes, that I will, said the good man! So the philosopher became a christian, and the good man entered into bond for performance of covenants. Some time after, it happened that the philosopher fell sick on his death-bed, and holding the bond in his hand, sent for the party engaged; to whom he gave up the bond, and said, Christ hath paid all, there is nothing for you to pay; take your bond and cancel it. Christ will suffer none of his children to go by the loss; he hath all, and he will make up all to them; in the close, Christ will pay the reckoning. No man shall ever have cause to say, that he hath been a loser by Christ; and therefore thou hast much cause to be mute, thou hast no cause to murmur, though God hath snatched the fairest and the sweetest flower out of thy bosom.

10. How canst thou tell, but that which thou callest a near and dear mercy, if it had been continued longer to thee, might have proved the greatest cross, the greatest calamity

and misery that ever thou didst meet with in this world? Our mercies, like choice wines, oftentimes turn into vinegar! our fairest hopes are often blasted; and that very mercy which we sometimes have said should be a staff to support us, hath proved a sword to pierce us. How often have our most flourishing mercies withered in our hands, and our bosom contentments been turned into gall and wormwood! If God had continued the life of David's child to him, it would have been but a living monument of his sin, and then all who knew the child would have pointed at him, Yonder goes David's natural child, and so would have kept David's wound still a bleeding. Many parents, who have sought the lives of their children with tears, have lived afterwards to see them take such courses and come to such dismal ends, as have brought their grey heads with sorrow to their graves. It had been ten thousand times a greater mercy to many parents, to have buried their children as soon as ever they were born, than to see them come to such unhappy ends as they often do. Well, christian, it may be the Lord hath taken from thee such a hopeful son, or such a dear daughter, and thou sayest, How can I hold my peace? But hark, christian! canst thou tell me how long thou must have travailed in birth with them again, before they had been regenerated, before they had been twice born? Would not every

sin that they had committed against thy gracious God have caused a new throe in thy soul? would not every temptation by which they had fallen been as a dagger at thy heart? Would not every affliction that should have befallen them, been as a knife at thy throat? What are those pains, and pangs, and throes of child-birth, to those after-pains, pangs, and throes, that might have been brought upon thee, by the sins and sufferings of thy children? Well, christians, hold your peace, for you do not know what thorns in your eyes, what goads in your sides, nor what spears in your hearts, such near and dear mercies might have proved, had they been longer continued.

11. Thou canst not tell how bad thy heart might have proved under the enjoyment of those near and dear mercies that thou now hast lost. In the winter men gird their clothes close about them, but in the summer they let them hang loose; in the winter of adversity, many a christian girds his heart close to God, to Christ, to the gospel, to godliness, to ordinances, to duties, &c. who in the summer of mercy hangs loose from all.

Who can seriously consider this, and not hold his peace, even then when God takes a jewel out of his bosom? Heap all the sweetest contentments, and most desirable enjoyments of this world upon a man, they will not make him a christian; heap them upon a chris-

tian, they will not make him a better christian; many a christian hath been made worse by the good things of this world, but where is the christian that hath been bettered by them? Therefore be quiet when God strips thee of them.

Lastly, Get thy heart more affected with spiritual losses, and then thy soul will be less afflicted with those temporal losses that thou mournest under. Hast thou lost nothing of that presence of God that once thou hadst with thy spirit? Hast thou lost none of those warnings, meltings, quickenings, and cheerings, that once thou hadst? Hast thou lost nothing of thy communion with God, nor of the joys of the Spirit, nor of that peace of conscience, that thou once enjoyedst? Hast thou lost none of that ground that once thou hadst got upon sin, Satan, and the world? Hast thou lost nothing of that holy vigor, and heavenly heat, that once thou hadst in thy heart? If thou hast not, (which would be a miracle, a wonder,) why dost thou complain of this or that temporal loss? For what is this, but to complain of the loss of thy purse, when thy gold is safe? But if thou art a loser in spirituals, why dost thou not rather complain, that thou hast lost thy God, than that thou hast lost thy gold? and that thou hast lost thy Christ, than that thou hast lost thy husband? and that thou hast lost thy peace, than that thou hast

lost thy child? and that thou art a loser in spirituals, than that thou art a loser in temporals? Dost thou mourn over the body the soul hath left? Mourn rather over the soul that God hath forsaken, as Samuel did for Saul, 1 Sam. xv. 35.

What is the loss of a husband, a wife, a child, a friend, to the loss of God, Christ, the Spirit, or the least measure of grace, or communion with God? &c. Yet so simple and childish are many christians, that they are more affected and afflicted with the loss of this and that poor temporal enjoyment, than they are with the loss of their most spiritual attainments. Ah, christians! be but more affected with spiritual losses, and you will be more quiet and silent under temporal losses. Let these things suffice for answer to the second objection.

Object. 3. "Oh! but my afflictions, my troubles have been long upon me, and how then can I hold my peace? Were they but of yesterday, I would be quiet, but they are of a long continuance, and therefore how can I be silent?"

To this I answer, 1. Thou canst not date thy affliction from the first day of thy pollution. Thou hast been polluted from the womb, Ps. li. 5, but thou hast not been afflicted from the womb. Many have been the days, the years, since thou wast born in sin; few have been the days, the years, that thou hast experienced

sorrow; thou canst not easily number the days of thy sinning, thou canst easily number the days of thy suffering; thou canst not number thy days of mercy, thou canst easily number thy days of calamity; thou canst not number thy days of health, but thou canst easily tell over thy days of sickness.

Thy afflictions are not so long as the afflictions of other saints; compare thy winter nights, and other saints' winter nights, thy storms and troubles, and other saints' storms and troubles, thy losses, and other saints' losses, thy miseries, and other saints' miseries. Witness these following proofs, Ps. lxxvii. and lxxxviii.; Gen. xv. 12, 13; Jer. xxv. 11, 12. Thy afflictions are but as a moment, they are but as yesterday, if compared with the afflictions of other saints, whose whole lives have been made up of sorrows and sufferings, as the life of Christ was; many a man's life hath been nothing but a lingering death—"And another dieth in the bitterness of his soul, and never eateth with pleasure," Job xxi. 25. There are those that have never a good day all their days; who have not a day of rest among all their days of trouble, nor a day of health among all their days of sickness, nor a day of gladness among all their days of sadness, nor a day of strength among all their days of weakness, nor a day of honor among all their days of reproach; whose whole life is one con-

tinued winter's night, who every day drink gall and wormwood, who lie down sighing, who rise groaning, and who spend their days in complaining. No sorrow like our sorrows, no sufferings like our sufferings; there are some who have always tears in their eyes, sorrows in their hearts, rods on their backs, and crosses in their hands; but it is not so with thee, therefore be silent.

3. The longer thy affliction hath been, the sweeter will heaven be to thee at last. The longer the Israelites had been in the wilderness, the sweeter was Canaan to them at last. The longer the storm, the sweeter the calm; the longer the winter nights, the sweeter the summer days; long afflictions will much set off the glory of heaven. The harbor is most sweet and desirable to them that have been long tossed upon the seas; so will heaven be to those who have been long in a sea of troubles. The new wine of Christ's kingdom is most sweet to those that have been long drinking of gall and vinegar, Luke xxii. 18. The crown of glory will be most delightful to them who have been long combating with the world, the flesh, and the devil. The longer our journey is, the sweeter will be our end; and the longer our passage is, the sweeter will our haven be. The higher the mountain, the gladder we shall be when we are got to the top of it. The longer the heir is kept from

his inheritance, the more delight he will have when he comes to possess it.

4. They are not long, but short, if compared to that eternity of glory that is reserved for the saints, 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. If you turn to the words, you shall find for affliction, glory; for light afflictions, a weight of glory; and for short, momentary afflictions, eternal glory: there will quickly be an end of thy sadness, but there will never be an end of thy happiness; there will soon be an end of thy calamity and misery, there will never be an end of thy felicity and glory. The kingdoms of this world are not lasting, much less are they everlasting, they have all their climacterical years; but the kingdom of heaven is an everlasting kingdom, of that there is no end. The crowns that were in use among the Roman victors, were all fading and perishing; but the crown of glory that at last God will set upon the heads of his saints, shall continue as long as God himself continues. Who can look upon those eternal mansions that are above, and those everlasting pleasures that are at God's right hand, and say, that his affliction is long? Well, christian, let thy affliction be ever so long, yet one hour's being in the bosom of Christ will make thee forget both the length and strength of all thy afflictions.

5. The longer you have been afflicted, the more in spiritual experiences you have been

enriched. "For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ," 2 Cor. i. 5. The lower the ebb, the higher the tide; the more pain, the more gain; the more afflicted, the more comforted; the lower we are cast, the higher we shall be raised. Of all christians, none so rich in spiritual experiences as those that have been long in the school of affliction, Heb. xii. 11; 2 Cor. xii. 9; Job xxxiii. 17—25. Oh! the blessed stories that such can tell of the power of God supporting them, of the wisdom of God directing them, of the favor of God comforting them, of the presence of God assisting them! Oh! the sins that long afflictions have discovered and mortified! Oh! the temptations that long afflictions have prevented and vanquished! You shall as soon number the stars of heaven, and the sands of the sea, as you shall number up the heavenly experiences of such christians as have been long under afflictions. The afflicted christian's heart is fullest of spiritual treasure; though he may be poor in the world, yet he is rich in faith and holy experiences; and what are all the riches of this world to spiritual experiences? One spiritual experience is more worth than a world; and, upon a dying bed, and before a judgment-seat, every man will be of this opinion. The men of this world will, with much quietness and calmness of spirit, bear much and suffer much,

aye, and suffer long, when they find their sufferings add to their revenues; and shall nature do more than grace? It is the common voice of nature, "Who will show us any good?" How shall we come to be great, and high, and rich in the world? We care not what we suffer, nor how long we suffer, so we may but add house to house, heap to heap, bag to bag, and land to land. Oh! how much more then should christians be quiet and calm under all their afflictions, though they are ever so long! considering, that they do but add jewels to a christian's crown; they do but add to his spiritual experiences. The long afflicted christian hath the fullest and the greatest trade; and, in the day of account, will be found the richest man.

6. Long afflictions sometimes are but preparatives to long-lived mercies. Joseph's thirteen years' imprisonment was but a preparative to fourscore years reigning like a king; David's seven years' banishment was but a preparative to forty years reigning in much honor and glory; Job's long afflictions were but preparatives to more long-lived mercies, as you may see in the last chapter of Job; and those sad and sore trials that the Jews have been under for above seventeen hundred years, are to prepare them for those matchless mercies, Isa. lxii. lxiii. and lxvi., and those endless glories, (in some sense,) that God in the

latter days will crown them with. "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted, behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colors, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children. In righteousness shalt thou be established: thou shalt be far from oppression, for thou shalt not fear; and from terror, for it shall not come near thee," Isa. liv. 11—14. Though they have been long afflicted and tossed, yet they shall, at last, upon glorious foundations, be established; God will not only raise them out of their distressed estate, wherein now they are, but he will advance them to a most eminent and glorious condition in this world; they shall be very glorious, and outshine all the world in spiritual excellences and outward dignities. "The sons also of them that afflicted thee, shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee, shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, the Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas, thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations," Isa. lx. 14, 15. Ah, christians! do not mutter nor murmur under

your afflictions; for you do not know but that, by these long afflictions, God may prepare and fit you for such favors and blessings that may never have an end; by long afflictions, God many times prepares his people for temporal, spiritual, and eternal mercies. If God, by long afflictions, makes more room in thy soul for himself, his Son, his Spirit, his word; if, by long afflictions, he shall crucify thy heart more to the world, and to thy relations, and frame and fashion thy soul more for celestial enjoyments, hast thou any cause to murmur? Surely no.

7. The longer a saint is afflicted on earth, the more glorious he shall shine in heaven; the more affliction here, the more glory hereafter, 2 Cor. iv. 16—18; Matt. v. 10—12. This truth may be thus made out:

(1.) The more gracious souls are afflicted, the more their graces are exercised and increased, Heb. xii. 10: Rom. v. 3—5. Now, the more grace here, the more glory hereafter; the higher in grace, the higher in glory. Grace differs nothing from glory but in name; grace is glory in the bud, and glory is grace at the full; glory is nothing but the perfection of grace, happiness is nothing but the perfection of holiness; grace is glory in the seed, and glory is grace in the flower; grace is glory militant, and glory is grace triumphant; grace and glory differ in degree not in kind, as the

learned speak. Now, it is most certain, that the more gracious souls are afflicted, the more their graces are exercised; and, the more grace is exercised, the more it is increased; as I have sufficiently demonstrated in this treatise already.

(2.) The longer a gracious soul is afflicted, the more his religious duties will be multiplied. "For my love they are my adversaries; but I give myself unto prayer," Ps. cix. 4; or, as the Hebrew reads it—but I am prayer, or a man of prayer. In times of affliction, a christian is all prayer; he is never so much a man of prayer, a man given up to prayer, as in times of affliction. A christian is never so frequent, so fervent, so abundant in the work of the Lord, as when he is afflicted. "Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them," Isa. xxvi. 16. Now, they not only pray, but they pour out a prayer; they were freely, largely, and abundantly in prayer, when the rod was upon them. As men plentifully pour out water for the quenching of a fire, so did they plentifully pour out their prayers before the Lord; and as affliction puts a man upon being much in prayer, so it puts him upon other duties of religion answerably. Now, this is most certain, that though God will reward no man for his works, yet he will reward every man according to his works, Matt. xxv.

46. "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord," 1 Cor. xv. 48. "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully," 2 Cor. ix. 6; or, he which soweth in benedictions or blessings, shall reap in benedictions, as it runs in the original.

It is an excellent observation of Calvin, upon God's rewarding the Rechabites' obedience, Jer. xxxv. 19. God, saith he, oft recompenseth the shadows and seeming appearance of virtue, to show what complacency he takes in the ample rewards he hath reserved for true and sincere piety. Now, if the longer a christian is afflicted, the more his religious services will be multiplied; and the more they are multiplied, the more his glory at last will be increased; then, the longer a saint is afflicted on earth, the more glory he shall have when he comes to heaven.

(3.) The longer any saint is afflicted, the more into the image and likeness of Christ he will be transformed. It is one of God's great designs and ends in afflicting his people, to make them more conformable to his Son; and God will not lose his end; men often lose theirs, but God never hath lost, nor will lose his; and experience tells us, that God doth

every day, by afflictions, accomplish his end upon his people; the longer they are afflicted, the more they are made conformable to Christ, in meekness, lowliness, spirituality, heavenliness, faith, love, self-denial, pity, compassion, &c. Now, certainly, the more like to Christ, the more beloved of Christ; the more a christian is like to Christ, the more he is the delight of Christ; and the more like to Christ on earth, the nearer the soul shall sit to Christ in heaven. Nothing makes a man more conformable to Christ than afflictions.

8. The longer they have been, the greater cause thou hast to be silent and patient, for impatience will but lengthen out the day of thy sorrows; every impatient act adds one link more to the chains; every act of frowardness adds one lash more to those that have already been laid on; every act of muttering will but add stroke to stroke, and sting to sting; every act of murmuring will but add burden to burden, and storm to storm; the most compendious way to lengthen out thy long afflictions, is to fret, and vex, and murmur under them. As thou wouldst see a speedy issue of thy long afflictions, sit mute and silent under them.

9. God's time is the best time; mercy is never nearer; salvation is at hand, deliverance is at the door, when a man's heart is brought into such a frame as to be freely willing that God should time his mercy, and time his de-

liverance for him. The physician's time is the best time for the patient to have ease. The impatient sufferer cries out to his physician, Oh, sir ; a little ease, a little refreshment ; oh, the pains, the torments that I am under ! Oh, sir ! I think every hour two, and every two ten, till refreshment comes, till comfort comes. But the prudent physician hath turned the hour-glass, and is resolved that his physic shall work so long, though his patient frets, flings and roars. So, when we are under afflictions, we are apt to cry out, How long, Lord, shall it be before ease comes, before deliverance comes ; Oh, the tortures ; oh the torments that we are under ! Lord, a little refreshment. Oh, how long are these nights ! Oh, how tedious are these days ! But God hath turned our glass, and he will not hearken to our cry till our glass be out ; after all our fretting and flinging, we must stay his time, who knows best when to deliver us, and how to deliver us out of all our troubles ; and who will not stay a moment when the glass is out that he hath turned. But,

Lastly, They shall continue no longer than there is need, and then they shall work for thy good. It is with souls as it is with bodies ; some bodies are more easily and more suddenly cured than others are, and so are some souls ; God will not suffer the plaster to lie one day, no, not one hour, no, not a

moment, longer than there is need ; some flesh heals quickly, proud flesh is long healing ; by affliction God quickly heals some, but others are long healing. "If need be, ye are in heaviness, through manifold temptations," or, through various afflictions, 1 Pet. i. 6 : the burden shall lie no longer upon thee than needs must, thy pain shall endure no longer than needs must, thy physic shall make thee no longer sick than needs must, &c. Thy heavenly Father is a Physician, as wise as he is loving ; when thy heart begins to grow high, he sees there is need of some heavy affliction to bring it low ; when thy heart grows cold, he sees there is need of some fiery affliction to heat it, and warm it ; when thy heart grows dull and dead, he sees there is need of some smart affliction to enliven and quicken it. And as thy afflictions shall continue no longer than there is need, so they shall last no longer than they shall work for thy good. If so, thou hast no cause to complain that thy afflictions are long. That they shall thus work, I have fully proved in the former part of this book. And thus much for answer to the third objection.

Object. 4. "I would be mute and silent under my afflictions, but my afflictions daily multiply and increase upon me ; like the waves of the sea, they come rolling one over the neck of another, and how, then, can I hold my

peace? How can I lay my hand upon my mouth, when the sorrows of my heart are daily increased?"

To this I answer thus,

1. Thy afflictions are not so many as thy sins; thy sins are as the stars of heaven, and as the sands of the sea, that cannot be numbered. There are three things that no christian can number: (1.) His sins. (2.) Divine favors. (3.) The joys and pleasures that are at Christ's right hand. But there is no christian so poor an accountant, but that he may quickly sum up the number of his troubles and afflictions in this world. Thy sins, O christian! are like the Syrians that filled the country; but thy afflictions are like the two little flocks of kids that pitched before them, 1 Kings xx. 27, therefore hold thy peace.

2. If such should not be mute and silent under their afflictions, whose afflictions are increased and multiplied upon them, then there are none in the world who will be found mute and silent under their afflictions; for certainly there are none who do not find the waters of affliction to grow daily upon them. What mean the daily sighs, groans, and complaints of christians amongst us, if their troubles, like the waters in Ezekiel's sanctuary, be not still increasing upon them? Every day brings us tidings of new straits, new troubles, new crosses, new losses, new trials, &c.

3. They are not so many as God might have exercised thee with. God could as easily exercise thee with ten as with two, and with a hundred as with ten, and with a thousand as with a hundred. Let thy afflictions be ever so many, yet they are not so many as they might have been, had God either consulted with thy sins, with thy deserts, or with his own justice; there is no comparison between those afflictions that God hath inflicted upon thee, and those that he might have inflicted; thou hast not one burden of a thousand that God could have laid on, but he would not; therefore hold thy peace.

4. Thy afflictions are not so many as thy mercies; nay, they are not to be named in the day wherein thy mercies are spoken of. What are thy crosses to thy comforts, thy miseries to thy mercies, thy days of sickness to thy days of health, thy days of weakness to thy days of strength, thy days of scarcity to thy days of plenty? And this is that the wise man would have us seriously to consider. "In the day of adversity consider;" but what must we consider? "that God hath set the one over-against the other," Eccl. vii. 14. As God hath set winter and summer, night and day, fair weather and foul, one over-against another; so, let us set our present mercies over-agaiust our present troubles, and we shall presently find that our mercies exceed our troubles, that

they mightily overbalance our present afflictions ; therefore let us be silent, let us lay our hands upon our mouths.

5. If you cast up a just and righteous account, you will find that they are not so many as the afflictions that have befallen other saints. Have you reckoned up the afflictions that befell Abraham, Jacob, Job, Asaph, Heman, the prophets and apostles ? If you have, you will say, that your afflictions are no afflictions to those that have befallen them ; their lives were filled up with sorrows and sufferings, but so are not yours ; therefore kiss the rod, and be silent. It may be, if thou lookest but upon thy relations, thy friends, thy neighbors, thou mayst find many whose afflictions, for number and weight, do much outweigh thine ; therefore be silent, murmur not, hold thy peace.

6. Not so many as attended our Lord Jesus, whose whole life, from the cradle to the cross, (Isa. liii. read the whole chapter,) was nothing but a life of sufferings. Many afflictions did Christ meet with whilst he was in this world ; none can be ignorant of this who have but read the New Testament ; he is called a man of sorrows ; his whole life was filled up with sorrows ; when he was but a little past thirty years of age, sorrows, pains, troubles, oppositions, and persecutions, had so worn him, that the Jews judged him towards fifty, John viii. 57. A man had as good compare the number

of his bosom friends with the stars of heaven, as compare his afflictions and the afflictions of Christ together.

7. Muttering and murmuring will but add to the number. When the child is under the rod, his crying and fretting doth but add lash to lash, blow to blow. But of this enough before.

Lastly, Though there are many, yet they are not so many as the joys, the pleasures, the delights that are at Christ's right hand; as the pleasures of heaven are matchless and endless, so they are numberless. Augustine, speaking concerning what *we* can say of heaven, saith, that it is but a little drop of the sea, and a little spark of the great furnace. Those good things of eternal life are so many, that they exceed number; so great, that they exceed measure; so precious, that they are above all estimation. Neither Christ nor heaven can be hyperbolized; for every affliction, many thousand joys and delights will attend the saints in a glorified state. What will that life be, or rather, what will not that life be, saith one, (speaking of heaven,) since all good either is not at all, or is in such a life? light which place cannot comprise, voices and music which time cannot ravish away, odors which are never dissipated, a feast which is never consumed, a blessing which eternity bestoweth, but eternity shall

never see at an end. And let this suffice for answer to this fourth objection.

Object 5. "My afflictions are very great, how then can I hold my peace? Though they were many, yet if they were not great, I would be mute; but, alas! they are very, very great! Oh! how can I be silent under them? How can I now lay my hand upon my mouth?"

To this I answer, 1. Though they are great, yet they are not so great as thy sins, thyself being judge; therefore hold thy peace. Read Ps. cvi; Neh. ix. "And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve," Ezra ix. 13. They that are under the sense and guilt of great sins, have cause to be silent under their greatest sufferings. Never complain that thy afflictions are great, till thou canst say, that thy sins are not great; it is but justice that great afflictions should attend great sins, therefore be quiet. Thy sins are like great rocks, and mighty mountains; but so are not thy afflictions, therefore lay thy hand upon thy mouth. The remembrance of great sins should cool and calm a man's spirit under his greatest troubles; and if the sense of thy great sins will not stop thy mouth, and silence thy heart, I know not what will.

2. It may be they are not great, if you look

upon them with scripture spectacles. Flesh and blood many times look upon mole-hills as mountains, and scratches upon the hand as stabs at the heart; we make elephants of flies, and of little pigmies we frame giants. Carnal reason often looks upon troubles through false glasses. As there are some glasses that will make great things seem little, so there are others that will make little things seem great; and it may be that thou lookest upon thy afflictions through one of them. Look upon thy afflictions in the glass of the word, look upon them in a scripture dress, and then they will be found to be but little; he that shall look into a gospel glass, shall be able to say, Heavy afflictions are light, long afflictions are short, bitter afflictions are sweet, and great afflictions are little, 2 Cor. iv. 16—18. It is good to make a judgment of your afflictions, by a gospel light and by a gospel rule.

Men that look not upon their afflictions in a scripture dress, will be afraid even of the shadow of trouble; they will cry out, No affliction like our affliction, no burden like our burden, no cross like our cross, no loss like our loss; but one look into a gospel glass would make them change their note. Our troubles are not always so great as we fancy them to be. When Hagar's bottle of water was spent, she sat down and fell a weeping, as if she had been utterly undone; her provision and her pa-

tience, her bottle and her hope, were both out together, Gen. xxi. 15—19; but her affliction was not so great as she imagined; for there was a well of water near, though for a time she saw it not. So, many christians eye the empty bottle, the cross, the burden that is at present upon them, and then they fall a weeping, whining, complaining, repining, and murmuring, as if they were utterly undone; and yet a well of water, a well of comfort, a well of refreshment, a well of deliverance is near, and their case no way so sad nor so bad as they imagine it to be.

3. The greater thy afflictions are, the nearer is deliverance to thee. When these waters rise high, then salvation comes upon the wing; when thy troubles are very great, then mercy will ride post to deliver thee. "For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power" (or hand) "is gone, and there is none shut up or left," Deut. xxxii. 36. Israel of old, and England of late years, hath often experienced this truth. Wine was nearest, when the water-pots were filled with water to the brim; so oftentimes mercy is nearest, deliverance is nearest, when our afflictions are at the highest; when a christian is brimful of troubles, then the wine of consolation is at hand: therefore hold thy peace, murmur not, but sit silent before the Lord.

4. They are not great, if compared to the glory that shall be revealed. "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us," Rom. viii. 18. The apostle, upon casting up his accounts, concludes, that all the pains, troubles, trials, and torments, that we meet with in this world, are not to be put in balance with the glory of heaven. As the globe of the earth, which, after the mathematician's account, is many thousands of miles in compass, yet being compared to the greatness of the starry sky's circumference, is but a centre, or a little speck: so the troubles, afflictions, and sorrows of this life, in respect to eternal happiness and blessedness, are to be reputed as nothing, they are but as the prick of a pin to the starry heavens. They that have heard most of the glory of heaven, have not heard one quarter of that which the saints shall find there. That glory is inconceivable and inexpressible. Such is the splendor, the brightness, the glory, the happiness, that is reserved for the saints in heaven, that had I all the tongues of men on earth, and all the excellences of the angels in heaven, yet should I not be able to conceive, nor to express, that vision of glory to you; it is best hastening thither, that we may feel and enjoy that which we shall never be able to declare, Jude 6, 7; Matt. x 15; xi. 23, 24.

5. They are not great, if compared with the afflictions and torments of such of the damned, who, when they were in this world, never sinned at so high a rate as thou hast done. Doubtless there are many now in hell, who never sinned against such clear light as thou hast done, nor against such special love as thou hast done, nor against such choice means as thou hast done, nor against such precious mercies as thou hast done, nor against such singular remedies as thou hast done. Certainly there are many now roaring in everlasting burnings, who never sinned against such deep convictions of conscience as thou hast done, nor against such close reasonings of the Spirit as thou hast done, nor against such free offers of mercy, and rich tenders of grace, as thou hast done, nor against such sweet wooings, and multiplied entreaties of a bleeding, dying Saviour, as thou hast done; therefore hold thy peace. What are thy afflictions, thy torments, to the torments of the damned, whose torments are numberless, easeless, remediless, and endless; whose pains are without intermission or mitigation; who have weeping for the first woe, and gnashing of teeth for the second, and the gnawing worm for the third, and intolerable pain for the fourth, and an everlasting alienation and separation from God for the fifth! Ah, christian! how canst thou seriously think on these things, and not lay thy hand upon thy

mouth, when thou art under the greatest sufferings? Thy sins have been far greater than many of theirs, and thy greatest afflictions are but a flea-bite to theirs; therefore be silent before the Lord.

Lastly, If thy afflictions are so great, then what madness and folly it will be for thee to make them greater by murmuring! Every act of murmuring will but add unto the load, and burden to burden. The Israelites under great afflictions fell to murmuring, and their murmuring proved their utter ruin, as you may see in Numb. xiv. Murmuring will but put God upon heating the furnace seven times hotter; therefore hold thy peace. But of this I have spoken sufficiently already.

Object. 6. "Oh! but my afflictions are greater than other men's afflictions are, and how then can I be silent? Oh! there is no affliction like unto my affliction, how can I hold my peace?"

I answer, 1. It may be thy sins are greater than other men's sins: if thou hast sinned against more light, more love, more mercies, more experiences, more promises than others, no wonder thy afflictions are greater than others. If this be thy case, thou hast more cause to be mute than to murmur; and certainly, if thou dost but seriously look into the black book of thy conscience, thou wilt find greater sins there, than any thou canst charge

upon any person or persons upon earth. Never complain that thy afflictions are greater than others, except thou canst evidence that thy sins are less than others.

2. It may be thou art under some present distemper, that disables thee from making a right judgment of the different dealings of God with thyself and others. When the mind is distempered, and the brain troubled, many things seem to be that are not, and then little things seem very great. Oh! the strange passions, the strange imaginations, the strange conclusions that attend a distempered judgment.

When the mind is disturbed, men many times say they know not what, and do they know not what. It may be, when these clouds are blown over, and thy mind cleared, and thy judgment settled, thou wilt be of another opinion. The supplicant woman appealed from drunken king Philip, to sober king Philip. It is good to appeal from a distempered mind, to a clear, composed mind; for that is the way to make a righteous judgment of all the dispensations of God, both towards ourselves and towards others.

3. It may be that the Lord sees that it is very needful that thy afflictions should be greater than others; it may be thy heart is harder than other men's hearts, and prouder and stouter than other men's hearts; it may

be thy heart is more impure than others, and more carnal than others, or else more passionate and more worldly than others, or more deceitful and hypocritical than others, or more cold and careless than others, or more secure than others, or more formal and lukewarm than others. Now, if this be thy case, certainly God sees it very necessary, for the breaking up of thy hard heart, and the humbling of thy proud heart, and the cleansing of thy foul heart, and the spiritualizing of thy carnal heart, &c., that thy afflictions should be greater than others; and therefore hold thy peace. Where the disease is strong, the physic must be strong, or else the cure will never be wrought. God is a wise Physician, and he would never give strong physic, if weaker could effect the cure, Isa. xxvii. 8. The more rusty the iron is, the oftener we put it into the fire to purify it; and the more crooked it is, the more blows, and the harder blows, we give to strengthen it; thou hast been long gathering rust, and therefore if God deal thus with thee, thou hast no cause to complain.

4. Though thy afflictions are greater than this and that particular man's afflictions, yet, doubtless, there are many thousands in the world, whose afflictions are greater than thine. Canst thou seriously consider the sore calamities and miseries that the devouring sword hath brought upon many thousand christians in for-

eign parts, and say, that thy afflictions are greater than theirs? Surely no. Such are the dismal effects of war; the sword knows no difference betwixt the innocent and the guilty; betwixt young and old, bond and free, male and female; betwixt the precious and the vile, the godly and the profane, the prince and the subject, the nobleman and the beggar; the sword eats the flesh, and drinks the blood of all sorts and sexes, without putting any difference betwixt the one and the other. The poor protestants under the duke of Savoy, and those in Poland and Denmark, Germany, and several other parts, have found it so; many of their wounds are not healed to this day. Who can retain, in his fresh and bleeding memory, the dreadful work that the sword of war hath made in this nation, and not say, Surely many thousands have been greater sufferers than myself! they have resisted unto blood, but so have not I, Heb. xii. 4.

5. As thy afflictions are greater than other men's, so it may be thy mercies are greater than other men's mercies; and if so, thou hast no cause but to hold thy peace. As Job's afflictions were greater than other men's, so his mercies were greater than other men's; and Job wisely sets one against another, and then lays his hand upon his mouth, Job i. It may be thou hast had more health and more strength than others, more prosperity and more smiling

providences than others, more good days and more sweet and comfortable relations than others; if this be thy case, thou hast much cause to be mute, thou hast no cause to murmur; if now thy winter nights be longer than others, remember thy summer days have formerly been longer than others; and therefore hold thy peace. But,

Lastly, By great afflictions the Lord may increase thy graces, and thy name and fame in the world. By Job's great afflictions, God did greatly augment his faith and patience, proved his integrity, increased his wisdom, knowledge, and experience, and heightened his name and fame in the world, as you all know that have read his book. Bonds and afflictions waited on Paul in every city, Acts xx. 23; 2 Cor. xi. His afflictions and sufferings were very great, but by them the Lord increased his zeal, his courage, his confidence, his resolution, and his name and fame, both among sinners and saints. Certainly, if thou art dear to Christ, he will improve thee in spirituals, by all the great afflictions that are upon thee; he will raise thy faith, inflame thy love, quicken thy hope, brighten thy zeal, perfect thy patience and perfume thy name, and make it like a precious ointment, Prov. xxii. 1; Eccl. vii. 1, like a precious ointment poured forth; so that good men and bad men shall say, Lo, here is a christian indeed, here is a man more

worth than the gold of Ophir; therefore hold thy peace, though thy afflictions are greater than others.

Object. 7. "I would be silent, but my outward affliction is attended with sore temptations. God hath not only outwardly afflicted me, but Satan is let loose to buffet me; and therefore how can I be silent? How can I hold my peace now I am fallen under manifold temptations?" To this I answer,

1. No man is the less beloved because he is tempted, Eph. vi. 12, nay, those that God loves best are usually tempted most; witness David, Job, Peter, Paul; yea, and Christ himself, Matt. iv., who, as he was beloved above all others, so he was tempted above all others. He was tempted to question his Sonship; he was tempted to the worst idolatry, even to worship the devil himself; to the greatest infidelity, to distrust his Father's providence, and to use unlawful means for necessary supplies; and to self-murder—"Cast thyself down," &c. Those that were once glorious on earth, and are now triumphing in heaven, have been sorely tempted and assaulted. Our whole life, saith Austin, is nothing but a temptation; the best men have been worst tempted; therefore hold thy peace.

2. Temptation resisted and bewailed, will never hurt you, nor harm you; distasted temptations seldom or never prevail; so long as the

soul distastes them, and the will remains firmly averse against them, they can do no hurt; so long as the language of the soul is, "Get thee behind me, Satain," Matt. xvi. 23, the soul is safe. It is not Satan's tempting, but my assenting, it is not his enticing, but my yielding, that harms me; temptations may be troubles to my mind, but they are not sins upon my soul, whilst I am in arms against them. If thy heart trembles, and thy flesh quakes, when Satan tempts, thy condition is good; if Satan's temptations be thy greatest afflictions, his temptations shall never worst thee, nor harm thee; and therefore, if this be thy case, hold thy peace.

3. Temptations are rather hopeful evidences that thy state is good, that thou art dear to God, and that it shall go well with thee for ever, than otherwise. God had but one Son without corruption, Heb. ii. 17, 18, but he has none without temptation. Pirates make the fiercest assaults upon those vessels that are most richly laden; so doth Satan upon those souls that are most richly laden with the treasures of grace, with the riches of glory. When nothing will satisfy the soul, but a full departure out of Egypt, from the bondage and slavery of sin, and that the soul is firmly resolved upon a march for Canaan, then Satan, Pharaoh-like, Exod. xiv. 6, will furiously pursue after the soul with horses and chariots, that is,

with a whole army of temptations.* Well, a tempted soul, when it is worst with him, may safely argue thus, If God were not my Friend, Satan would not be so much my enemy; if there were not something of God within me. Satan would never make such attempts to storm me; if the love of God were not set upon me, Satan would never shoot so many fiery darts to wound me; if the heart of God were not towards me, the hand of Satan would not be so strong against me. When Beza was tempted, he made this answer, Whatsoever I was, Satan, I am now in Christ, a new creature, and that is it which troubles thee; I see thou dost envy me the grace of my Saviour. Satan's malice to tempt is not sufficient ground for a christian to dispute God's love upon; if it were, there is no saint on earth that would quietly possess Divine favor a week, a day, or an hour. The jailer is quiet when his prisoner is in bolts; but if he be escaped, then he pursues him with hue and cry: you know how to apply it. Men hate not the picture of a toad, the wolf flies not upon a painted sheep; no more doth Satan upon those he hath in chains; therefore hold thy peace, though thou art inwardly tempted, as well as outwardly afflicted.

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* Israel going into Egypt, had no opposition; but travelling into Canaan, they were never free.

4. Whilst Satan is tempting thee, Christ in the court of glory is interceding for thee. "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not," Luke xxii. 31, 32. Satan would fain have been shaking him up and down, as wheat is shaken in a fan; but Christ's intercession frustrates Satan's designed temptations. Whenever Satan stands at our right hand to tempt us, Christ stands at his Father's to intercede for us; "He ever lives to make intercession," Heb. vii. 25. Some of the learned think, that Christ intercedes only by virtue of his merits; others think, that it is done only with his mouth; probably it may be done both ways, the rather because he hath a tongue, as also a whole glorified body, in heaven; and is it likely, that the mouth which pleaded so much for us on earth, should be altogether silent for us in heaven? Christ is a person of the highest honor, he is the greatest favorite in the court of heaven, he always stands between us and danger; if there be any evil plotted or designed against us by Satan, the great accuser of the brethren, he foresees it, and by his intercession prevents it. When Satan puts in his pleas, and commences suit upon suit against us, Christ still undertakes our cause, he answers all his pleas, and non-suits Satan at every turn, and in spite of hell he

keeps us up in Divine favor. When Satan pleads, Lord, here are such and such sins that thy children have committed, and here are such and such duties that they have omitted, and here are such and such mercies that they have not improved, and here are such and such ordinances that they have slighted, and here are such and such motions of the spirit which they have quenched, Divine justice answers, All this is true; but Christ hath appeared on their behalf, he hath pleaded their cause, he hath fully and fairly answered whatever hath been objected, and given complete satisfaction to the utmost farthing. So that there is no accusation nor condemnation that can stand in force against them; upon which account the apostle triumphs—"Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," Rom. viii. 34. Christ's intercession should be the soul's anchorhold in time of temptation; in the day of thy temptation thou needest not be disturbed nor disquieted, but in peace and patience possess thine own soul, considering what a Friend thou hast in the court of glory, and how he is most active for thee, when Satan is most busy in tempting thee.

Lastly, All temptations that the saints meet with, shall work for their good; they shall be for their gain; the profit and advantage that

will redound to tempted souls, by all their temptations, is very great. Now, this will appear to be a most certain truth, by an induction of particulars, thus:

(1.) By temptations God multiplies and increases his children's spiritual experience, the increase of which is better than the increase of gold;* in the school of temptation God gives his children the greatest experience of his power supporting them, of his word comforting them, of his mercy warning then, of his wisdom counselling them, of his faithfulness joying in them, and of his grace strengthening them. "My grace is sufficient for thee," 2 Cor. xii. 9. Paul never experienced so deeply what almighty power was, what the everlasting arms of mercy were, and what infinite grace and goodness were, as when he was under the buffetings of Satan.

(2.) All their temptations shall be physical; their temptations shall be happy preventions of great abominations. "Lest I should be exalted,—lest I should be exalted,"† 2 Cor. xii. 7. It is twice in that one verse; he begins with it, and he ends with it: if he had not been buffeted, he might have been more highly exalted in his own conceit than he was before

* Frequent engagements add to the soldier's skill, and much increase his experience.

† Those soldiers that are most in fighting are least in sinning, and most free from diseases.

in his ecstacy. Ah, tempted souls! you say you are naught, very naught; but, had it not been for the school of temptation you might have been quite naught before this time. You say you are sick, you are even sick to death; why, your sickness had before this time killed you, had not temptations been physical to you; you are bad under temptations, but, doubtless, you would have been much worse, had not God made temptation a diet-drink for you.

(3.) Temptations shall much promote the exercise of grace. As the spring in the watch sets all the wheels a-going, and as Solomon's virtuous woman set all her maidens to work; so temptation sets faith on work, and love on work, and repentance on work, and hope on work, and holy fear on work, and godly sorrow on work. As the wind sets the mill at work, so the wind of temptation sets the graces of the saints a-going. Now faith runs to Christ, pleads the blood of Christ, looks to the recompense of reward, and takes the sword of the spirit, &c.; now love cleaves to Christ, hangs upon Christ, and will fight it out to the death for Christ; now hope flees to the horns of the sanctuary, puts on her helmet, and casts her anchor upon that within the veil, &c. Grace is never more acted than when a christian is most tempted. Satan made a bow of Job's wife, (of his rib, as Chrysostom speaks,) and

shot a temptation by her at Job, thinking to have shot him to the heart—"Curse God, and die;" but the activity of Job's graces was a breastplate that made him temptation-proof. The devil tempting Bonaventure, told him he was a reprobate, and therefore persuaded him to drink in the present pleasures of this life; for, saith he, thou art excluded from the future joys with God in heaven. Bonaventure's graces being active, he answered, No, not so, Satan; if I must not enjoy God after this life, let me enjoy him as much as I can in this life.

(4.) By temptations the Lord will make you the more serviceable and useful to others;* none so fit and able to relieve, to sympathize with, to succor, to counsel, to pity, to support, to bear with, and to comfort tempted souls, as those who have been in the school of temptations. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God," 2 Cor. i. 3, 4. By temptations God trains up his servants, and fits and capacitates them to succor and shelter their fellow-brethren. One tempted christian,

* The most skilful commanders and leaders are of greatest service and use to the soldiers.

saith Luther, is more profitable and useful to other christians, than a hundred (I may add, a thousand) that have not known the depths of Satan, that have not been in the school of temptation, Rev. ii. 24. He that is master of arts in the school of temptation, hath learned an art to comfort, to succor, and gently to handle tempted and distressed souls, infinitely beyond what all human arts can reach; no doctor like him that has been a doctor in the school of temptation; all other doctors are but illiterate dunces to him.

(5.) It is an honor to the saints to be tempted, and, in the issue, to have an honorable conquest over the tempter. It was a great honor to David that he should be put to fight hand to hand with Goliah, 1 Sam. xvii., and, in the issue, to overcome him; but it was a far greater honor to Job and Paul, that they should be put to combat in the open field with Satan himself, Job i. ii.; 2 Cor. xii. 7—10, and, in the close, to gain a famous conquest over him, as they did. It was a very great honor to David's three mighty men, that, in jeopardy of their lives, they broke through the host of the Philistines, 2 Sam. xxiii. 13—17, to bring water to David out of the well of Bethlehem, and did effect it in spite of all the strength and power of their enemies, though it were to the extremest hazard of their blood and lives; but it is a far greater honor to the saints to be fur-

nished with a spirit of strength, courage, and valor, to break through an army of temptations, and, in the close, to triumph over them; and yet, this honor have all the saints. "But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will, with the temptation, also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it," 1 Cor. x. 13. "And the God of peace shall tread Satan under your feet shortly," Rom. xvi. 20. "I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, children, because ye have known the Father. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one," 1 John ii. 13, 14. "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not," that is, "that sin that is unto death," ver. 16; or he sinneth not as other men do, delightfully, greedily, customarily, resolvedly, impenitently, &c. "But he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not," 1 John v. 18. The glorious victory that the people of God had over Pharaoh, Exod. xiv., and his great host, was a figure of the victory that the saints shall obtain over Satan and his instruments;

which is clear from Rev. xv. 3, where we have the song of Moses and of the Lamb. But why the song of Moses and of the Lamb? but to hint this to us, that the overthrow of Pharaoh was a figure of the overthrow of Satan, and the triumphal song of Moses was a figure of that song which the saints shall sing for their overthrow of Satan. As certainly as Israel overcame Pharaoh, so certainly shall every true Israelite overcome Satan. The Romans were worsted in many fights, but were never overcome in a set war; at length they overcame all their enemies. Though a christian may be worsted by Satan in some particular skirmishes, yet, at the end, he is sure of an honorable conquest. God puts a great deal of honor upon a poor soul, when he brings him into the open field to fight it out with Satan; by fighting, he overcomes, he gains the victory, he triumphs over Satan, and leads captivity captive. It is the glory of a christian to be made strong to resist, and to have his resistance crowned with a happy conquest.

(6.) By temptations the Lord will make his people more frequent and more abundant in the work of prayer: every temptation proves a strong alarm to prayer. When Paul was in the school of temptation he prayed thrice, that is, often; days of temptation are days of great supplication. Christians usually pray most when they are tempted most; they are most

busy with God when Satan is most busy with them; a christian is most upon his knees when Satan stands most at his elbow.

Augustine was a man much tempted, and a man much in prayer. Holy prayer, says he, is a shelter to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge to the devil.

Luther was a man under manifold temptations, and a man much in prayer; he is said to have spent three hours every day in prayer; he used to say, that prayer was the best book in his study.

Chrysostom was much in the school of temptation, and delighted much in prayer. Oh! says he, it is more bitter than death to be spoiled of prayer; and, hereupon, (as he observes,) Daniel chose rather to run the hazard of his life, than to lose his prayer. But,

(7.) By temptations the Lord will make his people more and more conformable to the image of his Son. Christ was much tempted, he was often in the school of temptation; and the more a christian is tempted, the more he will be transformed into the likeness of Christ. Of all men in the world, tempted souls must resemble Christ, in meekness, holiness, heavenliness, &c. The image of Christ is most fairly stamped upon tempted souls; tempted souls are much in looking up to Jesus; and every gracious look upon Christ changes the soul more and more into the image of Christ, Heb.

xii. 1, 2; 2 Cor. iii. 18; Heb. ii. 17, 18. Tempted souls experience much of the succorings of Christ; and the more they experience the sweet of the succorings of Christ, the more they grow up into the likeness of Christ; temptations are the tools by which the Father of spirits doth more and more carve, form, and fashion, his precious saints into the similitude and likeness of his dearest Son.

Lastly, Take many things in one, God, by temptations, makes sin more hateful, the world less delightful, and relations less hurtful. By temptations God discovers to us our own weakness, and the creatures' insufficiency, in the hour of temptation, to help us, or to succor us; by temptations God will brighten our christian armor, and make us stand more upon our christian watch, and keep us closer to a succoring Christ; by temptations the Lord will make his ordinances to be more highly prized, and heaven to be more earnestly desired. Now, seeing that temptations shall work so eminently for the saints' good, why should not christians be mute and silent? why should they not hold their peace, and lay their hand upon their mouth, though their afflictions are attended with great temptations!

Object. 8. "Oh! but God hath deserted me; he hath forsaken me; and he that should comfort my soul stands afar off; how can I be silent? The Lord hath hid his face from me;

clouds are gathered about me; God hath turned his back upon me; how can I hold my peace?"

Supposing that the desertion is real, and not in appearance only, as sometimes it falls out, I answer,

1. It hath been the common lot, portion, and condition, of the choicest saints in this world, to be deserted and forsaken of God, Ps. xxx. 6, 7; lxxvii. and lxxxviii.; Job xxiii. 8, 9; Cant. iii. 1—3; v. 6, 7; Isa. viii. 17; Micah vii. 7—9. If God deals no worse with thee than he has dealt with his bosom friends, with his choicest jewels, thou hast no reason to complain. But,

2. God's forsaking of thee is only partial, it is not total. God may forsake his people in part, but he never wholly forsakes them; he may forsake them in respect of his quickening, and of his comforting presence, but he never forsakes them in respect of his supporting presence. "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness," 2 Cor. xii. 9. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way. Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand," Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24. God's supporting hand of grace is still under his people, as the nurse upholds the little child. "My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me," Psa. lxiii. 8. Christ has al-

ways one hand to uphold his people, and another hand to embrace them, Cant. ii. 6. The everlasting arms of God are always underneath his people, Deut. xxxiii. 27. And this the saints have always found; witness David, Heman, Asaph, Job, &c. Though the children of God are sometimes under clouds of afflictions, yet the Sun of mercy, the Sun of righteousness, is never quite out of sight. But,

3. Though God hath forsaken thee, yet his love abides and continues constant to thee. He loves thee with an everlasting love, Jer. xxxi. 3. Where he loves, he loves to the end, John xiii. 1. "But Zion said, The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me," Isa. xlix. 14—16. But was not Zion mistaken? Yes. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will not I forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me." As persons engrave the mark, name, or picture, of those whom they dearly love upon some stone that they wear at their breasts, or upon some ring that they wear on their finger; so hath God engraven Zion upon the palms of his hands; she was still in his eye, and always dear to his heart, though she thought not so. As Joseph's heart was full of love to his brethren, even then when he spake roughly to them, and

withdrew himself from them, (for he was fain to go aside, and ease his heart by weeping,) so the heart of God is full of love to his people, even then when he seems to be most displeased with them, and to turn his back upon them. Though God's dispensations may be changeable towards his people, yet his gracious disposition is unchangeable towards them. When God puts the blackest veil of all upon his face, yet then his heart is full of love to his people, then his bowels are yearning towards them. "Is Ephraim my dear son? is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord," Jer. xxxi. 20. The mother's bowels cannot more yearn after the tender babe, than God's do after his distressed ones. As Moses' mother, when she had put him into the ark of bulrushes, Exod. ii., wept to see the babe weep, and, when she was turned from him, she could not but cast a weeping eye of love towards him; so, when God turns aside from his people, yet he cannot but cast an eye of love towards them. "How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?" &c. Hos. xi. 8. Here are four several "hows" in the text, the like not to be found in the whole book of God. I am even at a stand; justice calls for vengeance, but mercy interposes; my bowels yearn, my heart melts; oh! how shall I

give thee up? Oh! I cannot give thee up, I will not give thee up. God's love is always like himself, unchangeable; his love is everlasting; it is a love that never decays, nor waxes cold.

4. Though the Lord hath hid his face from thee, yet certainly thou hast his secret presence with thee, Ps. xxiii. 4; cxxxix. God is present when he is seemingly absent: "The Lord was in this place, and I knew it not," saith Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 16. The sun many times shines when we do not see it, and the husband is many times in the house when the wife does not know it. God is in thy house, he is in thy heart, though thou seest him not, though thou feelest him not, though thou hearest him not. "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5; or, as it may be rendered according to the Greek, "I will not, not leave thee, neither will I not, not forsake thee." Art thou not now drawn out to prize God, and Christ, and his love above all the world? Yes. Art thou not now drawn out to give the Lord many a secret visit, in a corner behind the door, in some dark hole, where none can see thee, nor hear thee, but the Lord? Yes. Are there not strong breathings, pantings, and longings after a clearer vision of God, and after a fuller fruition of God? Yes. Art thou not more affected with the drawings of Christ, than thou art with the greatest afflictions

that ever befel thee? Yes. Austin, upon that answer of God to Moses, "Thou canst not see my face and live," Exod. xxxiii. 20, makes this quick and sweet reply, "Then, Lord, let me die, that I may see thy face." Dost thou not often tell God, that there is no punishment like the punishment of loss, and no hell like that of being forsaken of God? Yes. Dost thou not find a secret power in thy soul, drawing thee forth to struggle with God, to lay hold on God, and patiently to wait on God, till he shall return unto thee, and lift up the light of his countenance upon thee? Yes. Well, then, thou mayest be confident, that thou hast a secret and blessed presence of God with thee, though God, in regard of his comforting presence, may be departed from thee; nothing below a secret presence of God with a man's spirit, will keep him waiting and working till the Sun of righteousness shines upon him. If any vain persons should put that deriding question to thee, Where is thy God? thou mayest safely and boldly answer them, My God is here, he is nigh me, he is round about me, yea, he is in the midst of me: "The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love; he will joy over thee with singing," Zeph. iii. 17. The bush, which was a type of the church, consumed not all the while it burned with fire, because God was in the midst

of it. It is no argument, that Christ is not in the ship, because tempests and storms arise.

5. Though God be gone, yet he will return again; though your sun be now set in a cloud, yet it will rise again; though sorrow may abide for a night, yet joy comes in the morning. A christian's mourning shall last but till morning: "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us," Micah vii. 19. "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and would not let him go," &c. Cant. iii. 4. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, thy comforts delight my soul," Psa. xciv. 19. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer. For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee; neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee," Isa. liv. 7, 8. 10. God will not suffer his whole displeasure to rise against his people, neither will he forsake them totally or finally: the saints shall taste but some sips of the cup of God's wrath, sinners shall drink the dregs; their storm shall end in a calm, and their winter night shall be turned into a summer's day. There was a woman, who was thirteen years

under desertion, which was so vehement, that, for the most part of her time, she was fain to keep her bed through weakness; a godly minister, who was affected with her condition, went to comfort her, and to pray with her; but when he came and offered to do it, she shrieked out, utterly refusing, and forbidding him to pray with her; for, said she, I have too many abused mercies to answer for already; yet he would not be put off, but prayed by her, and so prevailed with God on her behalf, that the next morning she was delivered from all her fears, and had such exceeding joy, that the like has rarely been heard of; the Lord, that had been long withdrawn from her, returned at length in a way of singular mercy to her. There was another precious woman, who was several years deserted, and hearing a godly minister preach, she of a sudden fell down, overwhelmed with joy, crying out, Oh! he is come whom my soul loveth! and for divers days after, she was filled with such exceeding joys, and had such gracious and singular ravishing expressions so fluently coming from her, that many came to hear the rare manifestations of God's grace in her; the lowest of her pious expressions did exceed the highest that ever the minister had read in the book of martyrs. But,

6. God's deserting, God's forsaking his people, shall many ways work for their good.

God, by withdrawing from his people, will prepare and fit them for greater refreshings, manifestations, and consolations. "God hath forsaken him; persecute and take him, for there is none to deliver him." But shall this forlorn condition work for his good? Yes: "Thou which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side," Psa. lxxi. 11. 20, 21. When Joseph's brethren were in their greatest distress, then Joseph makes known himself most fully to them; so doth Christ, our spiritual Joseph, to his people. Hudson the martyr, deserted at the stake, went from under his chain, and having prayed earnestly, was comforted immediately, and suffered valiantly.

By God's withdrawing from his people, he prevents his people's withdrawing from him; and so by an affliction he prevents sin; for God to withdraw from me, is but my affliction; but for me to withdraw from God, that is my sin; and therefore it were better for me that God should withdraw a thousand times from me, than that I should once withdraw from God, Heb. x. 38, 39. God therefore forsakes us, that we may not forsake our God; God sometimes hides himself, that we may cleave the closer to him, and hang the faster upon him. As the mother hides herself from

the child for a time, that the child may cleave the closer, and hang the faster upon her all the day long, God sometimes hid himself from David, "Thou didst hide thy face, and I was troubled," Ps. xxx. 7. I was all but dead: well, and is that all? No; "I cried to thee, O Lord; and unto the Lord I made my supplication," ver. 8. Now he cries louder, and cleaves closer to God than ever. So in Ps. lxiii. 1, 2, "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary." Well, and how do these withdrawings of God work? Why this you may see; "My soul followeth hard after thee;" or, as the Hebrew reads it, "My soul cleaveth after thee," ver. 8. As the husband cleaves to his wife, so doth my soul cleave to the Lord, Gen. ii. 24.

The Lord, by withdrawing from his people, will enhance and raise the price, and commend the worth, excellency, and sweetness, and usefulness of several precious promises, which otherwise would be but as dry breasts, and as useless weapons to the soul. As that, Micah vii. 19, "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us," &c.; and that, Isa. liv. 7, 8, and that, Heb. xiii. 5, 6, and that, Hab. ii. 3, and that, Ps. v. 12, "For thou, Lord,

wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him" (or crown him) "as with a shield;" the Lord will compass the righteous about with his favor, as the crown compasses about the head, as the Hebrew imports; and that, Ps. cxii. 4, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in darkness; he is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous;" and that, Jer. xxxi. 37, "Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord." As sure as heaven cannot be measured, nor the foundations of the earth searched by the skill or power of any mortal man; so sure and certain it is that God will not utterly cast off his people, no, not for all the evil that they have done. Now, at what a rate doth a deserted soul value these precious promises! Well, saith he, these promises are sweeter than the honey, or the honey-comb; they are more precious than gold, than fine gold, than much gold, than all the gold in the world; I prefer them before my food, before my delightful food; yea, before my necessary food, before my appointed portion, Job xxiii. 12. Deserted souls will lay up these precious promises in the cabinet of their hearts, as the choicest treasure the world affords. Deserted souls love the music of the promises; that promise,

1 Tim. i. 15, was music to Bilney the martyr; and that promise, John x. 29, was music to Urfine; and that promise, Isa. lvii. 15, was music to another; and that promise, Isa. xxxi. 3, was music to another; and that to another, Matt. xi. 28, &c. Promises that are suited to a deserted man's condition, make the sweetest music in his ear, and are his most sovereign cordials to bear up the spirits, that God can give, or heaven afford, or the soul desire: "He made him to ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the fruits of the field; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock," Deut. xxxii. 13. Ah! the honey, the oil that deserted souls suck out of such promises that speak home and close to their conditions!

By God's hiding his face, and withdrawing himself from thee, thou wilt be enabled more feelingly, and more experimentally, to sympathize with others, and to have compassion on others that are, or may be in the dark, and forsaken of God, as now thou art: "Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body," Heb. xiii. 3. In the natural body, if one member grieve, and is in pain, all suffer with it; when a thorn is got into the foot, how doth the back bow, and the eyes pry, and the hands go to pluck the thorn out! None so compassionate towards deserted souls,

as those who have been deserted and forsaken of God themselves. Oh! they know what an evil and a bitter thing it is to be left and forsaken of God, and therefore their bowels of compassion run out much, yea, most to such; they know that there is no affliction, no misery, no hell, to that of being forsaken of God.

But, alas! what is it to be forsaken of the world, to a man's being forsaken of God? Were there as many worlds as there are men in the world, a man had better be forsaken by them all, than be forsaken of God. There is a great truth in that saying of Chrysostom, That the torments of a thousand hells, if there were so many, come far short of this one; namely, to be turned out of God's presence, with, "I know you not," Matt. vii. 23. How sadly was Eli and his daughter affected with the loss of the ark, which was but a token of God's presence! But, oh! how much more is a christian affected and afflicted with the loss of the face and favor of God! The remembrance of which makes his heart to melt, and his bowels to yearn towards those whose sun is set in a cloud.

Hereby the Lord will teach his people to set a higher value upon his face and favor when they come to enjoy it. "It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth: I held him, and I would not let him go," &c. Cant. iii. 4. No man sets

so high a value upon Christ, as he that hath lost him, and found him again. Jesus is the rising Sun, Mal. iv. 2, especially to souls that have been long clouded. Oh! how highly does he prize and value the Sun of righteousness, his returning to him, and shining upon him! "Thy loving-kindness is better than life," or, better than lives, as the Hebrew has it, Ps. lxiii. 3. Divine favor is better than life with all its revenues, with all its appurtenances, as honors, riches, pleasures, applause, &c. Yea, it is better than many lives put together. Now, you know at what a high rate men value their lives; they will bleed, part with an estate, yea, with a limb, yea, limbs, to preserve their lives; as one cried out, Give me any deformity, any torment, any misery, so you spare my life. Now, though life be so dear and precious to a man, yet a deserted soul prizes the returnings of Divine favor upon him above life, yea, above many lives. Many men have been weary of their lives, as is evident in scripture and history; but no man was ever yet found, that was weary of the love and favor of God; no man sets so high a value upon the sun, as he that hath lain long in a dark dungeon. But,

Hereby the Lord will train up his servants in that precious life of faith, which is the most honorable, and the most happy life in all the world. "For we walk by faith, and not by

sight," 2 Cor. v. 7. The life of sense, the life of reason, is a low life, a mean life; the life of faith is a noble life, a blessed life.

It is the greatest happiness in this world to live much in the exercise of faith; no man lives so free, so holy, so heavenly, so happy a life, as he that lives a life of faith. By Divine withdrawings, the soul is put upon the highest and the purest acts of faith, to cleave to God, to hang upon God; and to carry it sweetly and obediently towards God, though he frowns, though he chides, though he strikes, yea, though he kills, Job xiii. 15. Those are the most excellent and heroic acts of faith that are most abstracted from sense and reason, he that suffers his reason to usurp over his faith, will never be an excellent christian; he that goes to school to his own reason, hath a fool to his schoolmaster; and he that suffers his faith to be overruled by his reason, shall never want woe. Where reason is strongest, faith usually is weakest; but now the Lord, by forsaking his people for a time, makes them skilful in the life of faith, which is the choicest and the sweetest life in this world.

7. By Divine withdrawings you are made more conformable to Christ your Head and Husband, who was under spiritual desertion as well as you. "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Matt. xxvii. 46. There is a hidden emphasis in the Hebrew word. El

signifies a strong God; Eli, Eli, my strong God, my strong God. The unity of Christ's person was never dissolved, nor were his graces ever diminished, in the midst of this terrible storm. His faith fortified and strengthened itself upon the strength of God. "My God, my God!" yet in respect of Divine protection, and Divine solace,* he was for a time forsaken of his Father. And if this be thy case, thou art herein but made conformable to thy Lord and Master; nay, thou dost but sip of that bitter cup of which Christ drank deep; thy cloud is no cloud to that which Christ was under.

Lastly, By these transient and partial forsakings, the Lord will exceedingly sweeten the clear, full, constant, and uninterrupted enjoyment of himself in heaven to all his people, Ps. lxxi. 20, 21. Onesimus departed from Philemon for a season, that he might receive him for ever, Philem. 15. So the Lord departs from his people for a time, that they may receive him for ever; he hides himself for a season, that his constant presence amongst his children in glory may be the more sweet and delightful to them.

Object. 9. "Oh! but I am falsely accused, and sadly reproached, and my good name,

* Christ was only forsaken in regard of his human nature, not in respect of his Godhead.

which would be as dear, or dearer to me than my life, is defamed, and things are laid to my charge, that I never did, that I never knew, &c.; and how then can I be silent? how can I hold my peace? I cannot forget the proverb, A man's eye and his good name can bear no jests; and how then can I be mute to hear men make jests upon my good name? and every day to see men treat it with all the scorn and contempt imaginable, that they may utterly blast it?" &c. To this I say,

1. That it must be granted, that a good name is one of the choicest jewels in a christian's crown; though a great name many times is little worth, yet a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches; it is better to have a good name abroad, than silver or gold laid up in a chest at home. "A good name is better than precious ointment," Eccl. vii. 1. Precious ointments were greatly in use, and highly esteemed among the Israelites in those eastern parts; they were laid up amongst the most precious things even in the king's treasury, Isa. xxxix. 2. Sweet ointments can but affect the smell, and comfort the brain, and delight the outward man; they reach not the best part, the noble part, namely, the soul, the conscience of a christian; but a good name does both.

Among all sorts and ranks of men in the world, a good name hath an attractive faculty; it is a precious ointment, that draws hearers to

attend good preachers, patients to attend physicians, clients to attend lawyers, scholars to attend schoolmasters, and customers to attend shopkeepers, who, with Demetrius, have a good report of all good men. Let a man's good name be but up, and he cannot easily want any thing that men or money can help him to. A good name will bring a man into favor, and keep a man in favor with all that are good: therefore say the moralists, "Whatsoever commodity you lose, be sure yet to preserve that jewel of a good name." A christian should be most careful of his good name, for a good name answers to all things, as Solomon speaks of money. "If I may but keep a good name, I have wealth enough," said the heathen. A christian should rather forego gold, than let go a good name; and he that robs a christian of his good name, is a worse thief than he that robs him of his purse, and rather deserves a hanging than he. But,

2. It must be granted, that a good name once lost, is very hardly recovered again; a man may more easily recover a lost friend, or a lost estate, than a lost name; a good name is like a princely structure, quickly ruined, but long a rearing. The father of the prodigal could say of his lost son, This my son was lost, but is found; he was dead, but is alive; but how few christians can say, This my good name was lost, but is found; it was dead, but

now it lives! When once a good name leaves a man, it hardly returns to him again; new wine is rarely put into old bottles; a man should stand upon nothing more than the credit of his conscience, and the credit of his name.

Three things a christian should stiffly labor to maintain: 1. The honor of God. 2. The honor of the gospel. 3. The honor of his own name. If once a christian's good name sets in a cloud, it will be long before it rises again.

3. Though all this be true, yet it has been the portion of God's dearest saints and servants to be slandered, reproached, vilified, and falsely accused, Matt. v. 10—12; 1 Pet. iii. 14; iv. 14; Ps. lxix. 7; Gen. xxxix.; Ps. iii.; 2 Sam. xvi. 11, 12; Job vi.; xiii.; xv.; Jer. li. 51. "Let the lying lips be put to silence; which speak grievous things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous," Ps. xxxi. 18. How sadly and falsely was Joseph accused by his wanton mistress! David by Doeg and Shimei! Job of hypocrisy, impiety, inhumanity, cruelty, partiality, pride, and irreligion! Job xxii. Was not Naboth accused of speaking blasphemy against God and the king? Did not Haman represent the Jews to the king as refractories and rebels? Was not Elias accused as the troubler of Israel, and Jeremiah the trumpet of rebellion? the Baptist a stirrer up of sedition, and Paul a pestilent incendiary? Were not the apostles generally

accounted deceivers and deluders of the people, and the offscourings of the world? &c. Rom. iii. 8; 2 Cor. vi. 8; 1 Cor. iv. 12, 13. Athanasius and Eustathius were falsely accused of adultery; adultery, heresy, and treason, were charged upon Cranmer; parricide upon Philpot; sedition upon Latimer. As the primitive persecutors usually put christians into bears' skins and dogs' skins, and then baited them; so they usually loaded their names and persons with all the reproach, scorn, contempt, and false reports imaginable, then baited them, and acted all their malice and cruelty upon them. I think there is no christian, but sooner or later, first or last, shall have cause to say with David, "False witnesses did rise up, they laid to my charge things that I knew not," Ps. xxxv. 11; they charged me with such things whereof I was both innocent and ignorant. It was the saying of one, That there was nothing so intolerable as accusation, because there was no punishment ordained by law for accusers, as there was for thieves, although they stole friendship from men, which is the goodliest riches men can have. Well, christians, seeing it has been the lot of the dearest saints to be falsely accused, and to have their names and reputes in the world reproached, do you hold your peace, seeing it is no worse with you than it was with them, of whom this world was not worthy. The rabbins say, that

the world cannot subsist without patient bearing of reproaches.

4. Our Lord Jesus Christ was sadly reproached, and falsely accused; his precious name (that deserves to be always writ in characters of gold, as the Persians usually write the names of their kings) was often eclipsed, before the sun was eclipsed at his death; his sweet name, that was sweeter than all sweets, was often crucified before his body. Oh! the stones of reproach that were frequently rolled upon that name by which we must be saved, if ever we are saved! Oh! the jeers, the scoffs, the scorns, that were cast upon that name that can only bless us! The name of Jesus, saith Chrysostom, hath a thousand treasures of joy and comfort in it. The name of a Saviour, saith Bernard, is honey in the mouth, and music in the ear, and a jubilee in the heart; and yet, where is the heart that can conceive, or the tongue that can express, how much reproach hath been cast upon Christ's names? and how many sharp arrows of reproach and scorn have been, and daily, yea, hourly, are shot by the world at Christ's name and honor! Such ignominious reproaches were cast upon Christ and his name, in the time of his life, and at his death, that the sun did blush, and mask himself with a cloud, that he might no longer behold them. "The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man glutton-

ous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners," Matt. xi. 19. But was he such a one? No. Wisdom is justified of her children. Wisdom's children will stand up, and justify her before all the world. "We remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again," Matt. xxvii. 63. But was he a deceiver of the people? No; he was the faithful and true Witness, Rev. i. 5; iii. 14. "The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil; who goeth about to kill thee?" John vii. 20. "Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well, that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?" chap. viii. 48. "And many of them said, He hath a devil, and is mad; why hear ye him?" chap. x. 20. It was a wonder of wonders that the earth did not open and swallow up these monsters, and that God did not rain hell out of heaven upon these horrid blasphemers; but their blasphemous assertions were denied and disproved by some of wisdom's children: "Others said, These are not the words of him that hath a devil: can a devil open the eyes of the blind?" ver. 21. The devil hath no such power, nor any such goodness, as to create eyes to him that was born blind.

Will you yet see more scorn and contempt cast upon the Lord of glory? Why, then, cast your eyes upon Luke xvi. 14, "And the

Pharisees, also, who were covetous, heard all these things, and they derided him." The Pharisees did not only laugh, fleer, and jeer at Christ, but they gave also external signs of scorn and derision in their countenance and gestures; they contemned him as a thing of nought, Mark xv. 19; Isa. lvii. 4; Matt. xxvii. 28, 29; and, in Luke xxiii. 35, both people and rulers. He is accused for being an enemy to Cesar, John xix. 12. Now, who can seriously consider the scorn, reproach, and contempt, that has been cast upon the name and honor of our Lord Jesus, and not sit silent and mute under all the scorn and contempt that has been cast upon his name or person in this world?

5. To be well spoken of by them that are ill spoken of by God, to be in favor with them who are out of favor with God, is rather a reproach, than an honor to a man. Our Saviour himself testifieth, that, in the church and nation of the Jews, they that had the most general approbation and applause, they who were most admired and cried up, were the worst, not the best men; they were the false, not the true prophets. "Woe unto you when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets," Luke vi. 26. Austin feared the praises of good men, and detested the praises of evil men. I would not, saith Luther, have the glory and fame of Erasmus;

my greatest fear is the praises of men. Phocion had not suspected his speech, had not the common people applauded it. Antisthenes mistrusted some ill in himself for the vulgar commendations. Socrates ever suspected that which passed with the most general commendations. To be praised of evil men, said Bion, is to be praised for evil doing; so, the better they speak of a man the worse, and the worse the better. The Lacedemonians would not have a good saying sullied with a wicked mouth. A wicked tongue soils all the good that drops from it; it is a mercy to be delivered from the praises of wicked men; wicked men's applauses oftentimes become the saints' reproaches. The heathen could say, What evil have I done, that this bad man commends me? There is a truth in that saying of Seneca, The worst me are commonly most displeased with that which is best. Who can seriously dwell on these things, and not be mute and silent under all the reproaches and scorn that are cast upon his name and credit in this world?

6. There will come a day when the Lord will wipe off all the dust and reproach that wicked men have cast upon the good names of his people; there shall be a resurrection of names, as well as of bodies; their names, that are now buried in the open sepulchres of evil throats, shall surely rise again; "their innocency shall shine forth as the light, and their

righteousness as the noon-day," Ps. xxxvii. 6. Though the clouds may for a time obscure the shining forth of the sun, yet the sun will shine forth again as bright and glorious as ever. "The righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance." Though the malicious slanders and false accusations of wicked men may for a time cloud the names of the saints, yet those clouds shall vanish, and their names shall appear transparent and glorious. God will take that care of his people's good name, that the infamy, calumnies, and contumelies, that are cast upon it, shall not long remain. The Jews rolled a stone upon Christ to keep him down, that he might not rise again; but an angel quickly rolls away the stone, and, in despite of his keepers, he rises in a glorious triumphant manner; so, though the world may roll this stone and that, of reproach and contempt, upon the saints' good names, yet God will roll away all those stones, and their names shall have a glorious resurrection, in despite of men and devils. That God who hath always one hand to wipe away his children's tears from their eyes, that God hath always another hand to wipe off the dust that lies upon his children's names; wronged innocency shall not long lie under a cloud; dirt will not stick long upon marble, or statues of gold.

Well, christians, remember this, the slanders and reproaches that are cast upon you,

are but badges of your innocency and glory. "If mine adversary should write a book against me, surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me," Job xxxi. 35, 36. All reproaches are pearls added to a christian's crown. Hence Austin, He that willingly takes from my good name, unwillingly adds to my reward; and this Moses well knew, which made him prefer Christ's reproach before Pharaoh's crown. That God who knows all his children by name, will not suffer their names to be long buried under the ashes of reproach and scorn; and, therefore, hold thy peace; the more the foot of pride and scorn tramples upon thy name for the present, the more resplendent and radiant it will be hereafter. Therefore, lay thy hand upon thy mouth.

7. The Lord hath been a swift and a terrible witness against such as have falsely accused his children, and loaded their names with scorn, reproach, and contempt, Isa. xli. 11. Ahab and Jezebel, who suborned false witnesses against Naboth, 1 Kings xxi. 10, 13, had their blood licked up by dogs, 2 Kings ix. Amaziah, who falsely accused the prophet Amos to the king, met with this message from the Lord, "Thy wife shall be an harlot in the city, thy sons and daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; thou shalt die in a polluted land," Amos vii. 17. Ha-

man, who falsely accused the Jews, Esther iii. 8, 9, and ix. 10, was one day feasted with the king, and the next day made a feast for crows. The envious courtiers, who falsely accused Daniel, were devoured by lions, Dan. vi. 24. Let me give you a view of the judgments of God upon such persons, out of histories.

Caiaphas the high priest, who gathered the council, and suborned false witnesses against the Lord Jesus, was shortly afterwards put out of office, and one Jonathan substituted in his room, whereupon he killed himself. John Cooper, a godly man, being falsely accused in queen Mary's days, by one Grimwood, shortly after, the said Grimwood, being in perfect health, his bowels suddenly fell out of his body, and so he died miserably. Narcissus, a godly bishop of Jerusalem, was falsely accused by three men of many foul matters, who sealed up with oaths and imprecations, their false testimonies; but shortly after that, one of them, with his whole family and substance, was burnt with fire; another of them was stricken with a grievous disease, such as in his imprecation he had wished to himself; the third, terrified with the sight of God's judgments upon the former, became very penitent, and poured out the grief of his heart in such abundance of tears, that thereby he became blind. A wicked wretch, under Commodus the emperor, accused Apollonius, a godly christian, to the judges, for cer-

tain grievous crimes; which, when he could not prove, he was adjudged to have his legs broken, according to an ancient law of the Romans. Gregory Bradway falsely accused one Brook, but, shortly after, through terrors of conscience, he sought to cut his own throat, but, being prevented, he fell mad.

I might produce a multitude of such instances, but let these suffice, to evidence how swift and terrible a witness God hath been against those that have been false accusers of his people, and have loaded their precious names with scorn and reproach; the serious consideration of which should make the accused and reproached christian to sit dumb and silent before the Lord.

Lastly, God himself is daily reproached. Men heed not to cast scorn and contempt upon God himself. Sometimes they charge the Lord that his ways are not equal, that it is a wrong way he goes in, Ezek. xviii. 25. Sometimes they charge God with cruelty; "My punishment is greater than I can bear," Gen. iv. 13. Sometimes they charge God with partiality, and respect of persons, because here he strokes, and there he strikes; here he lifts up, and there he casts down; here he smiles, and there he frowns; here he gives much, and there he gives nothing; here he loves, and there he hates; here he prospers one, and there he blasts another: "Where is the God

of judgment !" Mal. ii. 17 ; that is, no where; either there is no God of judgment, or, at least, not a God of exact, precise, and impartial judgment, &c. Sometimes they charge God with unbountifulness; that he is a God that will set his people to hard work, to much work, but will pay them no wages, nor give them any reward. "Ye have said, It is in vain to serve God : and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts ?" Mal. iii. 14. Sometimes they charge God that he is a hard master, and that he reaps where he hath not sown, and gathers where he hath not strawed, Matt. xxv. 24. Oh ! the infinite reproach and scorn that is every day, that is every hour in the day, cast upon the Lord, his name, his truth, his ways, his ordinances, his glory! Alas! all the scorn and contempt that is cast upon the saints, all the world over, is nothing to that which is cast upon the great God every hour ; and yet he is patient. Ah! how hardly do most men think of God! and how hardly do they speak of God! and how unhandsomely do they carry it towards God! and yet he bears. They that will not spare God himself, his name, his truth, his honor, shall we think it much that they spare not us or our names ? Surely no. Why should we expect that those should give us good words, that cannot afford God a good word from one week's end to another ? yea,

from one year's end to another ? Why should we expect that they should cry out, Hosanna, hosanna, to us, whereas, every day, they cry out of Christ, Crucify him, crucify him. "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub," (or a master fly, or a dunghill god, or the chief devil,) "how much more shall they call them of his household ?" Matt. x. 25. It is preferment enough for the servant to be as his lord; and if they stain and blaspheme the name of the Lord, never wonder if they revile thy name. And let this suffice to quiet and silence your hearts, christians, under all that scorn and contempt that is cast upon your name and reputation in this world.

Object. 10. The last objection is this: "Sir, in this my affliction I have sought to the Lord for this and that mercy, and still God delays me, and puts me off: I have several times thought that mercy had been near, that deliverance had been at the door, but now I see it is afar off, how then can I hold my peace ? How can I be silent under such delays and disappointments ?" To this objection I shall give you these answers:

1. The Lord doth not always time his answers to the swiftness of his people's expectations; he that is the God of our mercies, is the Lord of our times; God hath delayed long his

dearest saints; times belonging to him as well as issue. "O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not hear? even cry out unto thee of violence, and thou wilt not save!" Hab. i. 2. "Behold, I cry out of violence, but I have no answer; I cry aloud, but there is no judgment," Job xix. 7. "I am weary of crying, my throat is dried; mine eyes fail while I wait for my God," Ps. lxix. 3. "Make no tarrying, O my God," Ps. xl. 17. Though God had promised him a crown, a kingdom, yet he puts him off from day to day; and for all his haste, he must stay for it till the set time is come. Paul was delayed so long till he even despaired of life, and had the sentence of death in himself, 2 Cor. i. 8, 9. And Joseph was delayed so long till the irons entered into his soul, Ps. cv. 17—19. So he delayed long the giving in of comfort to Mr. Glover, though he had sought him frequently, earnestly, and denied himself to the death for Christ. Augustine being under convictions, a shower of tears came from him, and, casting himself on the ground under a fig-tree, he cries out, "O Lord! how long? how long shall I say, To-morrow, to-morrow? why not to-day, Lord, why not to-day?" God doth not always make haste to hear and save his dearest children; and therefore hold thy peace, he deals no worse with thee, than he hath done by his dearest jewels.

2. Though the Lord doth defer and delay

you for a time, yet he will come, and mercy and deliverance shall certainly come; he will not always forget the cry of the poor. "For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry," Heb. x. 37. "The vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie; though it tarry, wait for it," Hab. ii. 3. God will come, and mercy will come; though for the present thy sun be set, and thy God seems to neglect thee, yet thy sun will rise again, and thy God will answer all thy prayers, and supply all thy necessities. "Thou which hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side," Ps. lxxi. 20, 21.

3. Though God do delay thee, yet he doth not forget thee; he remembers thee still; thou art still in his eye, Isa. xlix. 14—16, and always upon his heart, Jer. xxxi. 20. He can as soon forget himself, as forget his people, Ps. lxxvii. 9, 10. The bride shall sooner forget her ornaments, and the mother shall sooner forget her sucking child, Isa. liv. 7—10, and the wife shall sooner forget her husband, Isa. lxii. 3—5, than the Lord shall forget his people. God always knows and remembers his people by name, Gen. viii. 1; xix. 29; and xxxii. 28. Therefore be silent, hold thy

peace; thy God hath not forgotten thee, though for the present he hath delayed thee.

4. God's time is always the best time; God always takes the best and fittest season to do us good. "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee," Isa. xlix, 8. I could have heard thee before, and have helped thee before, but I have taken the most acceptable time to do both. To set God his time is to limit him, Ps. lxxviii. 41. It is to exalt ourselves above him, as if we were wiser than God; though we are not wise enough to improve the times and seasons which God hath set us to serve and honor him in, yet we are apt to think that we are wise enough to set God his time, when to hear, and when to save, and when to deliver. To circumscribe God to our time, and to make ourselves lords of time, what is this but to divest God of his royalty and sovereignty of appointing times? It is but just and equal, that that God who hath made time, and who hath the sole power to appoint and dispose of time, should take his own time to do his people good. We are many times capricious, preposterous, and hasty, and now we must have mercy or we die, deliverance, or we are undone; but our impatience will never help us to a mercy one hour, one moment, before the time that God hath set. God will always take the best time to hand out mercies to

his people : there is no mercy so fair, so ripe, so lovely, so beautiful, as that which God gives out in his own time, therefore hold thy peace ; though God delays thee, yet be silent, for there is no possibility of taking a mercy out of God's hand, till the mercy be ripe for us, and we ripe for the mercy, Eccl. iii. 11.

5. The Lord, in this life, will certainly recompense, and make his children amends for all the delays and put-offs that he exerciseth them with in this world ; as he did Abraham, in giving him such a son as Isaac was, and Hannah, in giving her a Samuel. He delayed Joseph long, but at length he changed his iron fetters into chains of gold, his rags into royal robes, his stocks into a chariot, his prison into a palace, his bed of thorns into a bed of down, his reproach into honor, and his thirty years of suffering into eighty years of reigning in much grandeur and glory. So God delayed David long, but, when his suffering hours were out, he was anointed, the crown of Israel was set upon his head, and he was made very victorious, very famous and glorious, for forty years together. Well, christians, God will certainly pay you interest upon interest, for all the delays that you meet with, and therefore hold your peace.

Lastly, The Lord never delays the giving in of this mercy, or that deliverance, or the other

favor, but upon great and weighty reasons, and therefore hold thy peace.

Quest. "But what are the reasons that God doth so delay, and put off his people from time to time, as we see he doth?"

Ans. 1. For the trial of his people, and for distinguishing of them from others, Matt. xv. 21—28. As the furnace tries gold, so delays will try both the truth and the strength of a christian's graces; delays are a christian's touch-stone, that will try what men are made of, whether they be gold or dross, silver or tin; whether they be sincere or unsound; whether they be real christians. As a father, by crossing and delaying his children, tries their dispositions, and makes a full discovery of them, so that he can say, That child is of a muttering and grumbling disposition, and that is of a capricious and wayward disposition, but the rest are of a meek, sweet, humble, and gentle disposition; so the Lord, by delaying and crossing his children, discovers their different dispositions.

2. That they may have the greater experience of his power, grace, love, and mercy in the close. Christ loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus; yet he defers his coming for several days, and Lazarus must die, be put in the grave, and lie there till he stinks: and why so? but that they might have the greater

experience of his power, grace, and love towards them.

3. To sharpen his children's appetite, and to put a greater edge upon their desires, to make them cry out as a woman in travail, or as a man that is in danger of drowning. God delays, that his people may come to him with greater strength and importunity; he puts them off, that they may put on with more life and vigor. God seems to be cold, that he may make us the more hot; he seems to be slack, that he may make us the more earnest; he seems to be backward, that he may make us the more forward in pressing upon him. The father delays the child, that he may make him the more eager; and so doth God his, that he may make them the more divinely violent. When Balaam had once put off Balak, "he sent again certain princes more, and more honorable than they." Balaam's put-off did but make Balak the more importunate, it did but increase and whet his desires. This is that which God aims at by all his put-offs, to make his children more earnest, to whet up their spirits, and that they may send up more, and yet more honorable prayers after him; that they may cry out more earnestly, strive more mightily, and wrestle more importunately with God, and that they may take heaven with a more sacred violence. Anglers draw back the hook, that the fish may be more forward

to bite; and God sometimes seems to draw back, but it is only that we may press the more on. And therefore, as anglers, when they have long waited, and perceive that the fish do not so much as nibble at the bait, yet they do not impatiently throw away the rod, or break the hook and line; but pull up and look upon the bait, and mend it, and so throw it in again, and then the fish bites; so when a christian prays and obtains nothing. God seems to be silent, and heaven seems to be shut against him; yet let him not cast off prayer, but renew his prayer, pray more believingly, more affectionately, and more fervently; and then mercy, and comfort, and deliverance will come.

4. God delays and puts off his people many times, that he may make a fuller discovery of themselves to themselves. Few christians see themselves, and understand themselves. By delays, God discovers much of a man's sinful self, to his religious self; much of his worser part, to his better part; of his ignoble part, to his most noble part. When the fire is put under the pot, then the scum appears; so when God delays a poor soul, oh! how doth the scum of pride, of murmuring, of quarrelling, of distrust, of impatience, and of despair, discover itself in the heart of a poor creature! When God delays his people, and puts them off, ah! what cause have they

to cry out of themselves, to cry out of proud self, worldly self, carnal self, foolish self, and froward self! We are very apt, saith Seneca, to use spectacles to behold other men's faults, rather than looking-glasses to behold our own; but now God's delays are as a looking-glass in which God gives his people to see their own faults. Oh! that baseness, that vileness, that wretchedness, that sink of filthiness, that gulf of wickedness, which God, by delays, discovers to be in the hearts of men. But,

5. God delays and puts off his people, to enhance the value of mercy and deliverance. We usually set the highest value upon such things as we obtain with the greatest difficulty; what we dearly buy, that we highly prize; the more sighs, tears, weepings, waitings, watchings, strivings, and earnest longings this mercy, and that deliverance, and the other favor cost us, the more highly we shall value them; when a delayed mercy comes, it tastes more like a mercy, it works more like a mercy, it warms more, and it endears the heart to God like a mercy, more than any other mercy that a man enjoys.

"This is the child," saith Hannah, after God had long delayed her, "for which I prayed, and the Lord hath given me my petition which I asked of him." Delayed mercy is the cream of mercy; no mercy so sweet, so dear, so precious, to a man, as that which a man hath gain-

ed after many put-offs. Mr. Glover the martyr sought the Lord earnestly and frequently for some special mercies, and the Lord delayed him long; but when he was even at the stake, then the Lord gave in the mercies to him, and then, as a man overjoyed, he cries out to his friend, He is come, he is come!

6. The Lord delays his people, that he may pay them home in their own coin; God sometimes loves to retaliate. The spouse puts off Christ. "I have put off my coat, how can I put it on," &c. Cant. v. 3; and Christ puts her off, ver. 6—8. Thou hast put off God from day to day, or from month to month, yea, from year to year; and, therefore, if God puts thee off from day to day, or from year to year, hast thou any cause to complain? Surely no. Thou hast often and long put off the motions of his Spirit, the directions of his word, the offers of his grace, the entreaties of his Son; and, therefore what can be more just, than that God should delay thee for a time, and put thee off for a season, who hast delayed him, and put him off days without number? If God serves thee, as thou hast often served him, thou hast no reason to complain.

Lastly, The Lord delays his people, that heaven may be the more sweet to them at last. Here they meet with many delays, and with many put-offs; but in heaven they shall never meet with one put-off, with one delay. Here

many times they call, and cry, and can get no answer, Lam. iii. 8—14. Here they knock, and yet the door of grace and mercy opens not to them ; but in heaven they shall have mercy at the first word, at the first knock ; there, whatever heart can wish shall without delay be enjoyed. Here God seems to say sometimes, "Souls, you have mistaken the door," or, "I am not at leisure," or, "Others must be served before you," or, "Come some other time." But in heaven God is always at leisure, and all the sweetness and blessedness, and happiness of that state, presents itself every hour to the soul there. God will never say to any of his saints in heaven, Come to-morrow ; such language the saints sometimes hear now, but such language is no wise suitable to a glorified condition ; and therefore seeing that the Lord never delays his people, but upon great and weighty accounts, let his people be silent before him, let them not mutter nor murmur, but be mute ; and so I have done with the objections.

I shall come now in the last place, to propound some helps and directions, that may contribute to the silencing and stilling of your souls under the greatest afflictions, the sharpest trials, and the saddest providences, that you meet with in this world, and so close up this discourse.

1. All the afflictions that come upon the

saints, are the fruits of Divine love. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous therefore, and repent," Rev. iii. 19. "For whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," Heb. xii. 6. "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty," Job. v. 17. "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? and that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?" chap. vii. 17, 18. "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction," Isa. xlviii. 10. When Munster lay sick, and his friends asked him how he did, and how he felt himself? he pointed to his sores and ulcers, whereof he was full, and said, These are God's gems and jewels wherewith he decketh his best friends, and to me they are more precious than all the gold and silver in the world. There cannot be a greater evidence of God's hatred and wrath, than his refusing to correct men for their sinful courses and vanities, Hos. iv. 17, 19. "Why should you be smitten any more, you will revolt more and more," Isa. i. 5. Where God refuses to correct, there God resolves to destroy; there is no man so near the axe, so near the flames, so near hell, as he whom God will not so much as spend a rod upon. God is

most angry where he shows no anger. Jerome, writing to a sick friend, hath this expression, I account it a part of unhappiness not to know adversity; I judge you to be miserable, because you have not been miserable. Nothing, saith another, seems more unhappy to me, than he to whom no adversity hath happened. God afflicts thee, O christian, in love; and therefore Luther cries out, Strike, Lord; strike, Lord, and spare not. Who can seriously muse upon this, and not hold his peace, and not be silent under the most smarting rod?

2. Consider, that the trials and troubles, the calamities and miseries, the crosses and losses that you meet with in this world, are all the hell that ever you shall have; here you have your hell, hereafter you shall have your heaven; this is the worst of your condition, the best is to come. Lazarus had his hell first, his heaven last; but Dives had his heaven first, and his hell at last; thou hast all thy pangs, and pains, and throes here, that ever thou shalt have; thy ease, and rest, and pleasure are to come; here you have all your bitter, your sweet is to come; here you have your sorrows, your joys are to come; here you have all your winter nights, your summer days are to come; here you have your Passion-week, your Ascension day is to come; here you have your evil things, your good things are to come; death will put a period to all thy sins, and to all thy sufferings, and it will be an inlet to those

joys, delights, and contents, that shall never have an end; and therefore hold thy peace, and be silent before the Lord.

3. Get an assurance that Christ is yours, and pardon of sin yours, and Divine favor yours, and heaven yours, and the sense of this will exceedingly quiet and silence the soul under the sorest and sharpest trials a christian can meet with in this world. He that is assured that God is his portion, will never mutter nor murmur under his greatest burdens. He that can say, Nothing shall separate me from the love of God in Christ, will be able to triumph in the midst of the greatest tribulations. He that with the spouse can say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his," Cant. ii. 16, will bear up quietly and sweetly under the heaviest afflictions. In the time of the Marian persecution, there was a gracious woman, who being convened before bloody Bonner, (then Bishop of London,) upon the trial of religion, he threatened her that he would take away her husband from her; saith she, Christ is my husband; I will take away thy child; Christ, saith she, is better to me than ten sons; I will strip thee, saith he, of all thy outward comforts; yea, but Christ is mine, saith she, and you cannot strip me of him. The assurance that Christ was hers, bore up her heart, and quieted her spirit under all. "You may take away my life," saith Basil, "but you cannot take away my comfort; my head, but not my crown; yea,"

said he, "had I a thousand lives, I would lay them all down for my Saviour's sake, who hath done abundantly more for me." John Ardley professed to Bonner, when he told him of burning, and how ill he could endure it, "That if he had as many lives as he had hairs on his head, he would lose them all in the fire, before he would lose his Christ." Assurance will keep a man from muttering and murmuring under the sorest afflictions. Henry and John, (two Augustine monks,) being the first that were burnt in Germany, and Mr. Rogers, the first that was burnt in queen Mary's days, did all rejoice in the flames. A soul that lives under the assurance of Divine favor, and in its title to glory, cannot but bear up patiently and quietly under the greatest sufferings that possibly can befal it in this world. That scripture is worth its weight in gold: "The inhabitants of Zion shall not say, I am sick; the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity," Isa. xxiii. 24. He doth not say, they were not sick; no, but though they were sick, yet they should not say, they were sick. But why should they forget their sorrows, and not remember their pains, nor be sensible of their sickness? The reason is, because the Lord had forgiven them their iniquities; the sense of pardon took away the sense of pain, the sense of forgiveness took away the sense of sickness. Assurance of pardon will take away the pain,

the sting, the trouble of every trouble and affliction that a christian meets with; no affliction will daunt, startle, or stagger an assured christian; assured christians will be patient and silent under all, Ps. xxiii. l. 4—6. Melancthon makes mention of a godly woman, who having upon her death-bed been in much conflict, and afterwards much comforted, brake out in these words, "Now, and not till now, I understand the meaning of these words, 'Thy sins are forgiven;'" the sense of which did mightily cheer and quiet her. He that hath got this jewel of assurance in his bosom, will be far enough off from vexing or fretting under the saddest dispensations that he meets with in this world.

4. If you would be quiet and silent under your present troubles and trials, then dwell much upon the benefit, the profit, the advantage that hath redounded to your souls, by former troubles and afflictions that have been upon you. "In the day of adversity consider," Eccl. vii. 14.* Oh! now consider, how by former afflictions the Lord hath discovered sin, prevented sin, and mortified sin; consider how the Lord by former afflictions hath discov-

* There was a good man that had got so much good by his afflictions, that he counted it his greatest affliction to want an affliction; and therefore he would sometimes cry out, Oh, my friends, I have lost an affliction, I have lost an affliction.

ered to thee the impotency, the mutability, the insufficiency, and the vanity of the world, and all worldly concernments; consider how the Lord by former afflictions hath melted thy heart, and broken thy heart, and humbled thy heart, and prepared thee for clearer, fuller, and sweeter enjoyment of himself; consider what pity, what compassion, what bowels, what tenderness, and what sweetness, former afflictions have wrought in thee towards others in misery; consider what room former afflictions have made in thy soul for God, for his word, for good counsel, and for divine comfort; consider how by former afflictions the Lord hath made thee more partaker of his Christ, his Spirit, his holiness, his goodness, &c.; consider how by former afflictions the Lord hath made thee to look towards heaven more, to mind heaven, to prize heaven, and to long for heaven more, &c. Now, who can seriously consider all that good that he hath got by former afflictions, and not be silent under present afflictions? Who can remember those choice, great, and precious earnings, that his soul had made of former afflictions, and not reason himself into a holy silence under present afflictions? Thus, O my soul! hath not God done thee much good, great good, special good, by former afflictions? Yes. O my soul! hath not God done that for thee by former afflictions, that thou wouldst not have to do for ten thousand worlds? Yes. And is

not God, O my soul, as powerful as ever, as faithful as ever, as gracious as ever, and as ready and willing as ever, to do thee good by present afflictions, as he hath been to do thee good by former afflictions ? Yes, yes. Why, why then dost thou not sit silent and mute before him under the present troubles, O my soul? It was the saying of one, That an excellent memory was needful for three sorts of men : First, for tradesmen, for they, having many businesses to do, many reckonings to make up, many irons in the fire, had need of a good memory. Secondly, great talkers, for they, being full of words, had need to have a good store-house in their heads to feed their tongues. Thirdly, for liars, for they telling many untruths, had need of a good memory, lest they should be taken in their lying contradictions. And I may add, for a fourth, those that are afflicted, that they may remember the great good that they have gained by former afflictions, that so they may be the more silent and quiet under present troubles.

5. To quiet and silence your souls under the sorest afflictions and sharpest trials, consider, that your chief, your choicest treasure, is safe, 2 Tim. i. 12 ; your God is safe, your Christ is safe, your portion is safe, 2 Tim. iv. 8 ; your crown is safe, your inheritance is safe, your royal palace is safe, your jewels, your graces are safe ; therefore hold your peace.

I have read a story of a man that had a suit, and when his cause was to be heard, he applied himself to three friends, to see what they would do for him. One answered, He would bring him as far on his journey as he could; the second promised him, That he would go with him to his journey's end; the third engaged himself to go with him before the judge, and to speak for him, and not to leave him till his cause was heard and determined. These three are, a man's riches, his friends, and his graces; his riches will help him to comfortable accommodations while they stay with him, but they often take leave of a man before his soul takes leave of his body; his friends will go with him to the grave, and then leave him; but his graces will accompany him before God; they will not leave him, nor forsake him, they will go to the grave, and to glory with him.

In that famous battle at Leuctrum, where the Thebans got a signal victory, their captain Epaminondas, a little before his death, demanded whether his buckler were taken by the enemy? and when he understood that it was safe, and that they had not so much as laid their hands on it, he died most willingly, cheerfully, and quietly. Well, christians, your shield of faith is safe, your portion is safe, your royal robe is safe, your kingdom is safe, your heaven is safe, your happiness is safe; and

therefore, under all your afflictions and troubles, in patience possess your own souls.

6. If you would be silent and quiet under your sorest troubles and trials, then set yourselves in good earnest upon the mortification of your lusts.* It is unmortified lust which is the sting of every trouble, and which makes every sweet bitter, and every bitter more bitter; sin unmortified adds weight to every burden, it puts gall to our wormwood, it adds chain to chain; it makes the bed uneasy, the chamber a prison, relations troublesome, and every thing vexatious to the soul. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" James iv. 1. So say I; From whence comes all this muttering, murmuring, fretting, and vexing, &c.? Come they not hence, even from your unmortified lusts? Come they not from your unmortified pride, unmortified self-love, unmortified unbelief, and unmortified passions? Surely they do. Oh! therefore, as you ever would be silent under the afflicting hand of God, labor for more and more of the grace of the Spirit, by which you may mortify the lusts of the flesh, Rom. viii. 13. It is not your strongest resolutions, or purposes, without the grace of the Spirit, that can overmaster a lust. It was the

* Austin saith, If thou kill not sin till it die of itself, sin hath killed thee, and not thou thy sin.

blood of the sacrifice, and the oil, that cleansed the leper in the law; and that by them was meant the blood of Christ, and the grace of his Spirit, is agreed on all hands, Lev. xiv. 14—16. It was a touch of Christ's garment that cured the woman of her bloody issue, Mark v. 25—29. Philosophy, saith Lactantius, may hide a sin, but it cannot quench it; it may cover a sin, but it cannot cut off a sin; like a black patch instead of a plaster, it may cover some deformities in nature, but it cures them not; neither is it the papists' purgatories, watchings, whippings, nor St. Francis's kissing or licking of lepers' sores, which will cleanse the fretting leprosy of sin; in the strengh of Christ, and in the power of the Spirit, set roundly upon the mortifying of every lust. Oh! hug none, indulge none, but resolvedly set upon the ruin of all. One leak in a ship will sink it; one wound strikes Goliath dead, as well as three and twenty did Cæsar; one Delilah may do Samson as much spite and mischief as all the Philistines; one broken wheel spoils the whole clock; one vein's bleeding will let out all the vitals, as well as more; one fly will spoil a whole box of ointment, one bitter herb all the pottage; by eating one apple Adam lost paradise; one lick of honey endangered Jonathan's life; one Achan was a trouble to all Israel; one Jonah raises a storm and becomes lading too heavy for a whole ship. So one unmortified lust

will be able to raise very strange and strong storms and tempests in the soul in the days of affliction; and therefore, as you would have a blessed calm and quietness in your own spirits under your sharpest trials, set thoroughly upon the work of mortification. Gideon had seventy sons, Judg. viii. 30, 31; ix. 1—5, and but one bastard, and yet that bastard destroyed all his seventy sons. Ah, christian! thou dost not know what a world of mischief one unmortified lust may do; and therefore let nothing satisfy thee but the death of all thy lusts.

7. If you would be silent under your greatest afflictions, your sharpest trials, then make this consideration your daily companion—That all the afflictions that come upon you, come upon you by and through that covenant of grace that God hath made with you, Jer. xxxii. 36—44. God hath engaged himself to keep you from the evils, snares, and temptations of the world; in the covenant of grace, God hath engaged himself to purge away your sins, to brighten and increase your graces, to crucify your hearts to the world, and to prepare you for, and preserve you to his heavenly kingdom; and by afflictions he effects all this, and that according to his covenant too. "If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments." In these words you have a supposition that the saints may fall both

into sins of commission and sins of omission; in the following words you have God's gracious promise, "Then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes." God engages himself, by promise and covenant, not only to chide and check, but also to correct his people for their sins. "Nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail," Ps. lxxxix. 30—33. Afflictions are fruits of God's faithfulness, to which the covenant binds him; God would be unfaithful, if, first or last, more or less, he did not afflict his people; afflictions are part of that gracious covenant which God hath made with his people; afflictions are mercies, yea, covenant-mercies, Ps. cxix. 75. Hence it is that God is called the terrible God, keeping covenant and mercy, Neh. i. 5, because by his covenant of mercy he is bound to afflict and chastise his people. God, by covenant, is bound to preserve his people, and not to suffer them to perish; and happy are they that are preserved. All the afflictions that come upon a wicked man, come upon him by virtue of a covenant of works, and so are cursed unto him; but all the afflictions that come upon a gracious man, come upon him by virtue of a covenant of grace, and so they are blessed unto him, and therefore he hath eminent cause to hold his peace, to lay his hand upon his mouth.

8. If you would be silent and quiet under

afflictions, then dwell much upon this—That all your afflictions do but reach the baser and the ignoble part of a christian, his body, his outward man. "Though our outward man decay, yet our inward man is renewed day by day," 2 Cor. iv. 16. Aristarchus the heathen said, when he was beaten by the Tyrants, Beat on, it is not Aristarchus you beat, it is only his shell. Timothy had a very healthful soul in a crazy body, 1 Tim. v. 23; and Gaius, 3 John 2, had a very prosperous soul in a weak, distempered body. Epictetus, and many of the more refined heathens, have long since concluded, that the body was the organ, (or vessel,) the soul was the man and merchandise. Now, all the troubles and afflictions that a christian meets with, do not reach his soul, they touch not his conscience, they make no breach upon his noble part, and therefore he hath cause to hold his peace, and to lay his hand upon his mouth: the soul is the breath of God, the beauty of man, the wonder of angels, and the envy of devils, Heb. xii. 9. It is a celestial plant, and of a Divine offspring, Zech. xii. 1. It is an immortal spirit; souls are of an angelic nature, a man is an angel clothed in clay: the soul is a greater miracle in a man than all the miracles wrought among men. Now, it is not in the power of any outward troubles and afflictions that a christian meets with, to reach his soul; and therefore

he may well sit mute under the smarting rod.

9. If thou wouldst be silent and quiet under the saddest providences and sorest trials, then keep up faith in continual exercise. Now faith, in the exercise of it, will quiet and silence the soul. Thus,

(1.) By bringing the soul to sit down satisfied in the naked enjoyment of God.

(2.) By drying up the springs of pride, self-love, impatience, murmuring, unbelief, and the carnal delights of this world.

(3.) By presenting to the soul greater, sweeter, and better things in Christ, than any this world doth afford, Phil. iii. 7, 8.

(4.) By lessening the soul's esteem of all outward vanities: do but keep up the exercise of faith, and thou wilt keep silent before the Lord. No man so mute as he whose faith is still busy about invisible objects.

10. If you would keep silent, then keep humble before the Lord. Oh! labor every day to be more humble, and more low and little in your own eyes. Who am I, saith the humble soul, but that God should cross me in his mercy, Job vii. 17, 18, and take away that mercy, and pass a sentence of death upon every mercy? I am not worthy of the least mercy, I deserve not a crumb of mercy, I have forfeited every mercy, I have improved never a mercy. "Only by pride comes contention," Prov. xiii. 10. It is only pride that put men

upon contending with God and men ; a humble soul will lie quiet at the feet of God, it will be contented with mean fare; as you see sheep can live upon the bare commons, which a fat ox cannot. A dinner of green herbs relisheth well with the humble man's palate, whereas a stalled ox is but a coarse dish to a proud man's stomach; a humble heart thinks none less than himself, and none worse than himself, Gen. xxxii. 10. A humble heart looks upon small mercies as great mercies, and great afflictions as small afflictions, and small afflictions as no afflictions, and therefore sits mute and quiet under all. Do but keep humble, and you will keep silent before the Lord. Pride kicks, and flings, and frets, but a humble man hath still his hand upon his mouth. Every thing on this side hell is mercy, much mercy, rich mercy, to a humble soul ; and therefore he holds his peace.

11. If you would keep silent under the afflicting hand of God, then keep close, hold fast these soul-silencing, soul-quieting maxims or principles. As,

(1.) That the worst that God doth to his people in this world is in order to the making of them a heaven on earth ; he brings them into a wilderness, but it is, that he may speak comfortably to them, Hosea ii. 14. He casts them into the fiery furnace, but it is that they may have more of his company. Do the stones

come thick about Stephen's ears ? it is but to beat him the nearer to Christ, the Corner-stone, &c. Acts vii. 55—60.

(2.) If you would be silent, then hold fast this principle—That what God wills is best; when he wills sickness, sickness is better than health; when he wills weakness, weakness is better than strength; when he wills want, want is better than wealth; when he wills reproach, reproach is better than honor; when he wills death, death is better than life. As God is wisdom itself, and so knows that which is best; so he is goodness itself, and therefore cannot do anything but that which is best; therefore hold thy peace.

(3.) If thou wouldst be silent under thy greatest afflictions, then hold fast to this principle—That the Lord will bear thee company in all thy afflictions, Isa. xli. 10; xliii. 2; Ps. xxiii. 4; Dan. iii. 25; Gen. xxxix. 20, 21; 2 Tim. iv. 16, 17. These scriptures are breasts of divine consolation; these wells of salvation are full; will you turn to them, and draw out, that your souls may be satisfied and quieted ?

(4.) If you would be silent under your afflictions, then hold fast this principle—That the Lord hath more high, more noble, and more blessed ends in the afflicting of you, than he hath in the afflicting of the men of the world. The stalk and the ear of corn fall upon the

threshing floor, under one and the same flail; but the one is shattered in pieces, the other is preserved. From one and the same olive, and from under one and the same press, is crushed out both oil and dregs; but the one is turned up for use, and the other thrown out as unserviceable; so, though afflictions do befal good and bad alike, as the Scripture speaks, yet the Lord will effect more glorious ends by those afflictions that befal his people, than he will effect by those that befal wicked men; and therefore the Lord puts his people into the furnace for their trial, but the wicked for their ruin; the one is bettered by affliction, the other is made worse; the one is made soft and tender by afflictions, the other more hard and obdurate; the one is drawn nearer to God by afflictions, the other is driven further from God, &c.

(5.) If you would be silent under your afflictions, then you must hold fast this principle—That the best way in this world to have thine own will, is to lie down in the will of God, and quietly to resign up thyself to his good-will and pleasure. Luther was a man that could have any thing of God; and why? Because he submitted his will to the will of God; he lost his will in the will of God. Oh, soul! it shall be even as thou wilt, if thy will be swallowed up in the will of God.

Lastly, If thou wouldst be silent under the

afflicting hand of God, then thou must hold fast to this principle—That God will make times of affliction to be times of special manifestations of divine love and favor to thee. I could confirm this by a cloud of witnesses, but that I am upon a close. Ah, christians! as ever you would be quiet and silent under the smarting rod, hold fast to these principles, and keep them as your lives.

12. To silence and quiet your souls under the afflicting hand of God, dwell much upon the brevity or shortness of man's life. This present life is not life, but a motion, a journey toward's life. Man's life, saith one, is the shadow of smoke, yea, the dream of a shadow. Saith another, Man's life is so short, that Austin doubted whether to call it a dying life or a living death. Thou hast but a day to live, and perhaps thou mayest be now in the twelfth hour of that day; therefore hold out faith and patience, thy troubles and thy life will shortly end together; therefore hold thy peace, thy grave is going to be made, thy sun is near setting, death begins to call thee off the stage of this world, death stands at thy back, thou must shortly sail forth upon the ocean of eternity; though thou hast a great deal of work to do, a God to honor, a Christ to close with, a soul to save, a race to run, a crown to win, a hell to escape, a pardon to beg, a heaven to make sure, yet thou hast but a little time to do it in; thou

hast one foot in the grave, thou art even going a-shore on eternity ; and wilt thou now cry out of thy afflictions ? Wilt thou now mutter and murmur when thou art entering upon an unchangeable condition ? What extreme folly and madness is it for a man to mutter and murmur when he is just going out of prison, and his bolts and chains are just knocking off ! Why, christian, this is just thy case, therefore hold thy peace ; thy life is but short, therefore thy troubles cannot be long ; hold up, and hold out quietly and patiently a little longer, Rom. viii. 18, and heaven shall make amends for all.

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